A 75 6 23

# DIVINE MESSAGE TO THE ELECT SOUL.

DELIVERED

In Eight SERMONS upon Seven several TEXTS.

By that laborious and faithful Messenger of CHRIST,

Mr. WILLIAM FENNER, B. D.
Sometimes Fellow of *Pembroke-Hall*, in *Cambridge*, and late Minister of *Rochford* in *Essex*.

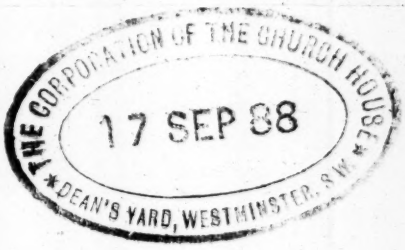
The fourth Edition, Corrected and amended by a worthy Friend of the Authors.

*I have sent you the pestilence, after the manner of* Egipt; *your young men have I slain with the sword, and have taken away your Horses, I have made the stink of the Camp come up to your nostrils, yet have ye not returned to me, saith the Lord: therefore thus will I do unto thee, O* Israel, *and because I will do thus unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O* Israel, Amos 4. 10, 12.

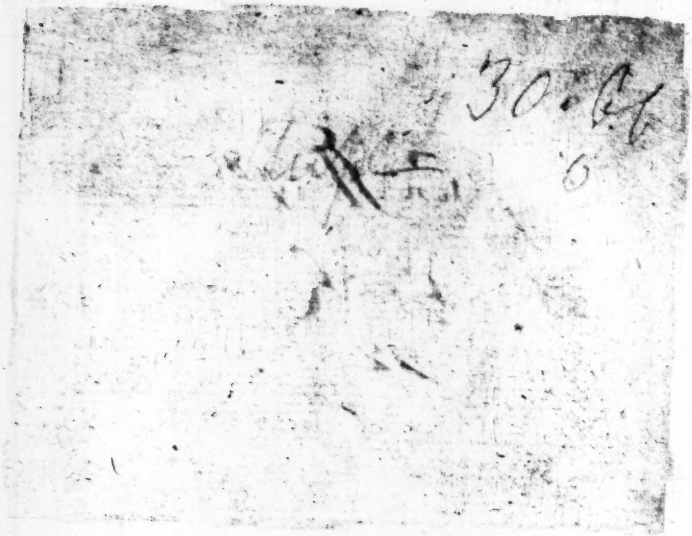
LONDON,
Printed for *W. Thackeray*, and are to be sold at his Shop, at the Angel in *Duck-Lane*. 1676.

John Hodges
his Book
92

THE CORPORATION OF THE CHURCH HOUSE
17 SEP 88
DEAN'S YARD, WESTMINSTER, S.W.



Presented by the
Reverend
Professor Mayor



A 75623

# A DIVINE MESSAGE TO THE ELECT SOUL.

DELIVERED

In Eight SERMONS upon Seven several TEXTS.

By that laborious and faithful Messenger of CHRIST,

Mr. WILLIAM FENNER, B. D.
Sometimes Fellow of *Pembroke-Hall*, in *Cambridge*, and late Minister of *Rochford* in *Essex*.

The fourth Edition, Corrected and amended by a worthy Friend of the Authors.

*I have sent you the pestilence, after the manner of* Egipt; *your young men have I slain with the sword, and have taken away your Horses, I have made the stink of the Camp come up to your nostrils, yet have ye not returned to me, saith the Lord: therefore thus will I do unto thee, O* Israel, *and because I will do thus unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O* Israel, Amos 4. 10, 12.

LONDON,
Printed for *W. Thackeray*, and are to be sold at his Shop, at the Angel in *Duck-Lane*. 1676.

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY LIBRARY
FEB

# The Epistle to the godly Reader of these pious Sermons.

THE Author of these ensuing Sermons, Master *William Fenner*, was so deservedly famous in the Church of God, and so well known unto me in particular, and one to whom I was so much obliged when he was Living, as that I could not think it sufficient to give a bare *Im-*

*primatur* unto his Sermons, but have added this testimony also, that thereby all good people might be encouraged to read these works of his, whose Life and Conversation was a continual Sermon, and who spent himself in Studying and Preaching, and whose Memory will be ever precious unto

*your loving Friend,*

Edm. Calamy.

To

# To the Reader.

*Good Reader*;

THe *Author* of theſe Sermons, having ſerved his time, and being fallen aſleep, the Lot is fallen upon me to appear in their behalf, and to ſeal unto their worth and uſefulneſs for publick ſervice, as far as thou pleaſeſt to ſeal unto my judgement and faithfulneſs in ſuch a caſe, with thine opinion and approbation. For the truth is, that the ſtrength and value of my teſtimony concerning them, is like to extend no further, than thine doth concerning me: So that if I add any thing to their credit and eſtimation in the World, by my recommendation, it is by the meditation of thine ingenuity and fairneſs towards me. But if thou ſhalt pleaſe to be at any reaſonable coſt in the reading of them, and lay thy judgement and conſcience as cloſe to the Spirit, as thou muſt thine eyes to the letter of what thou readeſt, I make no queſtion but I ſhall be the gainer, and not they, by this Engagement of my ſelf for them.

True worth, especially when it overcomes and breaks out of the Cloud of Obscurity, always returns more than what it Receives from any Man's Testimony: Neither is there any Method or Trade so proper and certain, whereby to raise an Estate of Honour and Reputation to a Mans own self, as the bestowing or casting Honour and Reputation upon others, so he be careful and dexterous in the choice of his Subject. *John Baptist* by giving Testimony onely to one, Jesus Christ, outgrew the Common Stature of those that are born of Women, in true greatness, *Mat.* 11. 11. And yet there was little or nothing (in effect) added to Jesus Christ himself by his Testimony, *John* 5. 34. It is an ingenuous and inoffensive way to serve our selves out of other Mens Excellencies, by advancing them: neither do the generality of men in their Practice, more generally consent upon any Principle, reason, and equity, than this, To recompence such men with terms of Honour, who are unparcial and free in subscribing and acknowledging the worth and eminency of others. And as many that are but of mean Condition in the World otherwise, yet maintain themselves comfortably, by trimming and dressing the

Gardens

Gardens and Orchards, and Vineyards of Rich and Wealthy Men: So many Men that want other personal Abilities and Excellencies of their own, subsist upon Terms of a convenient Reputation, only by vindicating, adorning, and setting-forth the Endowments and graceful parts of other men.

The Subject or Argument of these Sermons, is partly that noble and high importing strain of Christian Devotion: Preparation for that solemn Enterview of Jesus Christ in his Death, at his Table: The great severity of Gods proceedings against Despisers of Admonitions and Reproof. Both theams of savoury Consideration for all those that love not death; and more especially for those, who desire not only to be saved, but to be saved upon sweeter and more comfortable terms than as by Fire, 1 *Cor.* 3. 15. Those that were chastened with weakness, and sickness, and death, amongst the Corinthians, 1 *Cor.* 11. 30. were yet saved, *verse* 32. but this was as by, or through Fire: though they did not perish, were not consumed by the flames of Gods Displeasure against them, yet they were sorely scorched with them; the smell of this fire was strong upon the Garments of

their fleſh: They diſcerned not the Body of his Son Jeſus Chriſt, in his Ordinances; but inſtead of that Holy Reverend, and deep-ſtudied Behaviour which was due unto it, both from their Inner and outward Man, as being a Creature of the Higheſt and Deepeſt Sanctification that ever God Sanctified, Sanctified not only to a more Excellent and Glorious Condition, but alſo to many Ends and Purpoſes of far Higher and Deerer Concernment, both for the Glory of God, and Benefit of Men themſelves, then all other Creatures whatſoever, whether in Heaven or on Earth: They handled and dealt by it in both kinds, as if it had been but a Common or Unſanctified Thing; thus they diſcerned not the Lords Body. And as they diſcerned not his Body, ſo neither did God (in ſome ſence) diſcern theirs: But in thoſe ſore ſtrokes and heavy judgements which he inflicted on them, had them in no other regard or conſideration, than as if they had been the Bodies of his Enemies, the Bodies of Wicked and Sinful Men: thus drawing the model and platform of their puniſhment (as uſually he doth) from the ſtructure and Proportion of their Sin. And if the Moral or Spiritual Seeds and

Originals

Originals of our outward Bodily Afflictions; as ſickneſſes, weakneſſes, either upon our ſelves or ours, declining Eſtates, loſſes, &c. (which ſtill lye deeper than the natural) were but carefully and narrowly ſought out, it is much to be feared we ſhould find a great part of them (at leaſt) in the Bowels of the ſame ſin ſo frequent amongſt us, I mean, of *Not diſcerning the* LORDS *Body*. The Juſt and Righteous God builds up the Breaches that we make upon the honour belonging to the Body of his Son, with the ruines of that Honour which he had given unto ours in Health, Strength, Life, and many other outward Comforts and Supports.

But thou wilt hear more of theſe things in the Sermons themſelves: The wholeſome Admonitions and Reproofs wherein contained, with the reſt of that Heavenly Proviſion for thy Soul, which thou ſhalt find here gathered together, and laid into thy Hand, I heartily wiſh may be ſanctified unto thee by the Higheſt Hand of the Sanctifier; that ſo thy ſins and Corruptions may flye ſeven ways before that Spirit of power which here purſueth them, and thou never preſume to return back again unto them more. The God whom

we

we serve, is able to perform this great Petition, by Jesus Christ. To whose Grace the peace of thy Soul is faithfully and feelingly recommended, by

*That poor and unworthy Servant*

*of Christ and his Church;*

John Goodwin.

The

# The Contents and Heads of the eight following Sermons.

## The Contents of the first two Sermons from *Haggai* 1. 5.


*THe Preface shewing the usefulness of Meditation, together with the danger in neglecting it.* Page 1

*The opening of the Text in several particulars.* ibid.

Doctrine. *Serious Meditations of our sins by the word, is an especial means for to make us repent.* 2

*The definition of Meditation in four particulars.* 2

1. *It is an exercise of the mind.* 2
2. *A setled exercise of the mind.* 3
3. *It is to make a further enquiry into all the parts of the Truth.* 3
4. *It labours to affect the heart,* 4

Two Reasons.

1. *Because Meditation perseth all arguments home to the heart.* 5

2. *Be-*

# The Contents.


2. *Because meditation fastens sin close upon the soul, and makes the soul to feel it.* 6

1, Use. *For the reproof of several sorts of men that are loath to put in practice this so necessary a Duty.* 9

Four lets of Meditation.

1. *Vain company.* 10
2. *Multitude of worldly business.* 11
3. *Ignorance.* 12
4. *That natural averseness that is in the heart of man unto it.* 13

*This averseness of heart consisteth in three things.* 13
1. *In the careleseness of the heart.* 13
2. *In the runnings and rovings of the heart.* 13
3. *In the wearisomness of the heart in meditation.* 14

2, Use. *For Terrour unto all those that dare sit down in security, never at all regarding this soul-searching duty.* 14

Four means or helps to Meditation.

1. *With all seriousness tell the soul that thou hast a message from the Lord unto it.* 16
2. *Observe fitting times for meditation:*
viz.
1. *The Morning.* 17
2. *The Night.* 18
3. *The Evening.* 18
4. *When the heart is after some extraordinary man-*

*manner touched with Gods Word or Providences.* 18

3. *Call to mind what evil thou haſt done ever ſince thou waſt born.* 19

4. *Rouſe up thy heart and thoughts as high as heaven.* 19.

3, Uſe. *For reprehenſion of thoſe that meditate upon their ſins, and how they may with the more freeneſs commit ſin.* 20

## Four grounds upon which Meditation muſt be raiſed.

1. *Meditate on the goodneſs, mercy, and patience of God, that you have oft abuſed by your ſins.* 22

2. *Meditate on the Juſtice of God that you have ſo oft provoked.* 23

3. *Meditate on the wrath of God that you have ſo oft kindled.* 25

4. *Meditate on the Conſtancy of God, who is a conſtant hater of all ſin.* 26

## Four directions how to carry Meditation home to the heart.

1. *Weigh and ponder all the foregoing things in thine own heart.* 28

2. *Strip ſin, and look upon it ſtark-naked, and in its own Colours.* 29

3. *Dive into thine own ſoul, and ſearch thine heart to the quick.* 31

4. *Prevent thine own heart by meditation, and tell thy ſoul that it will one day wiſh, that it had not neglected this ſo neceſſary a duty.* 32

Four

# The Contents.


Four Duties to be discharged that we may put life to meditation.

1. *Let meditation haunt and dog thy heart with the promises, and threatnings, mercies, and judgements of God.* 34

2. *Let meditation trace thy Heart in the same steps, and run over all thy duties discharged.* 37

3. *Let Meditation hale thy heart before Gods Throne, there to pour out thy complaints before the Almighty.* 39

*And let thy complaint be,*

1. *Full of sorrow.* 40
2. *A full complaint of all thy sins.* 40
3. *A complaint aggravating all thy sins by all their circumstances.* 40
4. *A self-condemning complaint, wherein the complaint of* Ezra *is illustrated in eight particulars.* 41

4. *Let Meditation when it hath searched out thy case, and made it appear how woful it is, cast thee down before God.* 43

Four Motives to stir up the Soul to Meditation.

1. *Consider it is the part of a Fool not to Meditate: It is a madness of a Man to walk on in a course, and not to consider whether it will tend.* 45
2. *Consider, not to meditate is the brand of a Reprobate.* 46

3. *He*

3. *He that meditates not robs God of his honour.* 47

4. *All the service that a man performeth unto the Lord, will be abominable, if he meditate not before it and after it.* 47

*The reason why we have so many vain thoughts in our holy exercises, is, because we prepare not our hearts thereunto by meditation.* 48

## The Contents of the Third Sermon, *Proverbs* 1. 28.

1. THe opening of the context in five particulars. 50

2. *The opening of the words of the Text in four particulars.* 52

1. Doctrine. *Those that will not hear the Lord when he calleth upon them by the ministry of his word and voice of his Spirit, the Lord will not hear them, when in their misery they call upon him.* 53

### Three Reasons of the point.

1. *The law of retaliation, of rendring like for like requires it.* 55

2. *Because Gods two Attributes of Mercy and Justice, have their season in this life, and when mercy hath acted her part, then cometh Justice upon the Stage for to act her part.* 57

3. *Because it is Gods manner for to do so in temporal things, and therefore much more in matters of grace and salvation.* 58

God

# The Contents.


*God giveth to man a day, and no Man nor Angel knoweth how long this day lasteth, or when this season of Grace shall have an end.* 61

*And as there is a personal day, so there is a National day.* 62

Object. 1. *A man may be called at the eleventh or twelfth hour of the day.* 64

Answ. *Those that were called at the first hour, came in at the first hour; those that came in at the twelfth hour, were not the same that were called at the first hour.* 65

Object. 2. *The day of grace lasteth as long as the day of life.* 65

*The Objection is cleared under three particulars.*

Answ. *And it is answered, that the day of Grace may end to a particular man long before his death.* 66

1. *Because God may harden a mans heart.* 66

2. *Because God may sear mens Consciences.* 67

Object. 3. *Suppose I go on in my sin, and repent upon my death-bed, will God hear me?* 68

Answ. *The answer is negative.* 69

Object. 4. *Suppose I humble my self by fasting and prayer, will God hear that?* 69

*The answer is negative, if thou neglect the day of Grace.* 69

Object. 5. *At what time soever a sinner repents, he shall find mercy.* 69

Answ. *It is true, if he repent from the bottom of his heart, but a man may have many a degree of repentance, and yet never repent from his heart.* 70

*Self-love may make a man do much.* 70

2, Doct. *It may be this very day, even this particular Sermon, this instant hour may be thy day, that art now*

*now in thy sins, that if you repent not at this very one Sermon, thou neglectest eternal life for ever.* 70

Four reasons of the point.

1. *Because Gods patience is in his own breast, and who can tell how long it will last?* 71

*Wherein* Joel 2. 13. *is opened in five particulars.* 72

*God usually giveth some signs of death beforehand.* 73

*But the day of grace may end, and a man never have any warning of it.* 73

2. *Because Gods patience giveth no marks or inklings of its ending before it ends.* 74

3. *Because God keepeth a strict account how many opportunities he hath vouchsafed.* 76

4. *Consider it is a wonder that the day of grace is not ended already, and that thou art not now in hell.* 77

The Contents of the fourth Sermon, upon *Phil.* 3. 18, 19.

1. *AN Explanation of the several parts of the Text, in five particulars.* 82

Doct. *That those whose minds and thoughts run habitually on earth and earthly things, their end must needs be destruction.* 83

6 Reasons. 1. *The curse of God is the desert of vain thoughts.* 84

2. *The curse of God is the event of vain thoughts.* 86

3. *The man whose thoughts are habitually on the things of the world, can never truly repent.* 87

4. *Because that man whose thoughts run habitually*

on carthly things, hath no part in Jesus Christ. 89
For the thoughts and affections of the heart are the feet of the Soul. 89
5. becauſe ſo long as a mans thoughts run habitually on things of the world, that man hath no true love of God in him. 90
6. Becauſe ſo long as a mans thoughts run after the world, he can never depart from his ſins. 90
2 Uſes. 1. For humiliation, becauſe theſe vain thoughts bearing ſway in the heart, they make that mans end to be deſtruction. 91
2. For the terror of thoſe men who ſuffer their hearts to be taken up with vain thoughts 93
Object. But I think of God, and of Chriſt, of faith, and repentance. 95
Anſw. 1. Conſider whether thy good thoughts be meerly caſt into thy heart, or whether they be raiſed by thy heart. 95
A wicked man may have a thouſand good thoughts, and yet go to hell in the midſt of them. 96
2. Thou haſt good thoughts, but conſider whether they be fleeting or abiding thoughts. 98
There are two kinds of vain thoughts: Firſt, vain, becauſe the matter and ſubſtance of them is vain. Secondly, vain for want of durance & laſting, though not for the matter of them. 98
3. Thou thinkeſt of God, but conſider whether thy thoughts be ſtudied or accidental thoughts. When a good thought cometh into a godly mans heart, it leaveth a good impreſſion behind it; but when a good thought comes into a wicked mans heart, it leaves no impreſſion behind it. 100
A godly man not only thinketh of God, but he ſtudyeth how to think of God. 100

4. *Thou thinkeſt of God, but conſider whether thy thoughts of God be profitable, or unprofitable thoughts.* 101

*Thoughts are not free;*

1. *From Gods Knowledge.* 102
2. *They are not free from Gods word.* 103
3. *They are not free from the wrath of God.* 103

Three means, in the uſe whereof we may rid our ſelves of vain thoughts.

1. *Love the word of God.* 104
2. *Go unto God by prayer.* 104
3. *Conſider thou haſt not ſo learned Chriſt.* 105

All vain thoughts ariſe from theſe three heads.

1. *From the variety and abundance of the thoughts of the world.* 106
2. *From the Fountain of corruption that is in mens hearts.* 106
3. *From the damned malice of Satan, and his temptations both within and without.* 106

1. *Materially thoughts are vain;*

1. *When the matter of them is vain.* 107

*Such are the thoughts of the world, calling, or recreation: theſe are evil,*

1. *When we think of them primarily, that is, before we think of God.* 107
2. *When we think of them too uſually, too often.* 109
3. *When we think of them too ſavourly.* 110
4. *When we think of them without counſel.* 111
5. *When they are thought needleſly.* 111

2. *Thoughts are vain formally, when though the matter of them be never ſo good, yet the manner of thinking them is evil.* 112

*It is possible for a wicked man to go to hell, though he performe the same things for the matter of them that a godly man doth.* 113

3. *Thoughts are vain efficiently, when the heart that thinketh upon them is earthly and vain.* 114

4. *Thoughts are vain, when the drift and end of the soul in thinking on them is vain.* 115

*Wicked men will be thinking of God,*

1. *To make God amends for their dishonouring of him by their wicked thoughts.* 116

2. *To collogue with God, and to flatter him.* 117

3. *To smother and choke their own consciences.* 118

## The Contents of the fifth Sermon upon 1. Cor. 6. 2.

1. AN *Explanation of the Text, together with the verses foregoing and following.* 120

Doct. *The Saints shall judge the world.* 123

Object. *How shall the Saints judge the world.* 123

Ans. 1. *By their consent unto Christs judgement.* 123

2. *By their applause of Christs judgement.* 124

3. *By their Majesty; then shall they shine as the stars in the firmament, and the wicked shall be amazed at the sight of them.* 124

4. *By their lives and conversations, by their accepting of the Lord Jesus Christ, they shall judge the worlds rejecting of him.* 125

### Four Reasons of the point.

1. *First, Because of that mystical union that is betwixt Christ and his Saints, so when Christ judgeth the world, the whole body of Christ may be said to judge the world.* 125

2. *In regard of their sufferings with Christ, as they are*

*are judged by the world, so they shall be judged of the world.* 126
3. *For the greater terrour to all wicked men at the day of judgement.* 126
4. *Because the mouths of wicked men may be stopped, and that they may have no excuse for themselves.* 127
Use 1. *For information in five particulars.* 127
1. *Hence we may learn that the Saints, by their now being Saints, do now judge the world.* 128
*Wherein* Heb. 11.7. *is cleared from an objection.*
2. *Hence let the world learn, that when any one sinner is converted, there is one Judge more to sit upon them.* 129
3. *Hence we may learn that it concerns all the world to take notice of every Grace in Gods Children, because there is never a grace in any of the Saints, but it shall make for the condemnation of them that want it.* 130
4. *Learn hence, that if the saints, then much more the world that begets them, shall judge the world.* 131
5. *Learn hence also, that the Ministers of God by every Sermon they preach, shall judge the world.* 132
Use 2. *For to condemn the world, who see not an amiableness in the faces of the Saints, who shall one day be their judges, who shall judge both Saints and Angels.* 133
2. *This sheweth the folly of the wicked, who prepare not for these Judges.* 133
*Lastly, it condemns all those that do not see glory & Majesty in the faces of Gods Saints, he that revileth the Saints, revileth his Judges.* 134

Who shall judge the World?

1. *God the Father by way of Authority, all Judge-*

*ment is originally from him.* 136
2. *God the Son by way of dispensation.* 136
3. *God the Holy Ghost by way of conviction.* 136
4. *The word of God by way of form, it being the platform, according to which Christ will judge the whole world.* 137
5. *All the Ministers of God shall sit as Justices in common.* 138
6. *All the Saints from one end of the world to the other; shall assist the just Judge of Heaven and Earth.* 139

*So that the wicked shall not be able to plead,*
1. *Their ignorance.* 140
2. *Nor their poverty.* 140
3. *Neither their sinning at their Masters Command.* 141
4. *Neither callings nor tradings.* 141
5. *Neither the sinful times they live in.* 141

Use 3. *First, for the just reproof of many of the Saints of God, because they are not so circumspect over their ways, as they ought, how will they be able to rise up in judgement against the wicked for such sins as they themselves live in?* 142
2. *It may serve to condemn some of the Saints of God in regard of that little difference that is to be found betwixt the wicked of the world, and then in their lives and manners, that it is hard to tell which is a Saint and which is a Reprobate by their Conversations.* 143
3. *It may serve to condemn the scandalousness of many persons in their behaviour and actions.* 144

The

## The Contents of the Sixth Sermon, 1 Cor. 11. 30.

Doct. 1. *From the 18 verse, That whosoever will come to the holy communion, they must examine themselves, that they may come worthily.* 148

*The Apostle gives three Reasons of it.*

1. *From the end of the Sacrament.* 148
2. *From the wrong men offer to Christ, if they come in their sins.* 149
3. *From the woful wrong that a man doth to his own Soul that cometh without preparation.* 149

The Uses of the point are these.

1. *For the reproof of those that coming unpreparedly get no spiritual strength thereby.* 150
2. *For terror to unworthy receivers.* 150
3. *To shew they make themselves lyable to Gods temporary plagues.* 151
4. *For instruction to examine our selves.* 152
5. *He concludes with a Use of exhortation.* 152

An Explanation of the Words.

2 Doct. *God doth most severely punish the unworthy receivers of the Lords Supper.* 154

4 Reas. 1. *Because Christ himself instituted it.* 155
2. *Because Christ is the matter of it, and therefore the more hainous the defilement.* 158
3. *Because Christ is the form of it, wherein confirming grace is sealed to the soul.* 160
4. *Because Christ is the end of the Sacrament.* 162

Use 1. *For instruction, shewing whence sickness, weakness, &c. come.* 162
2. *From whence comes hardness of Heart, &c.* 167

Use 2. *For comfort unto every poor afflicted soul, &c.* 167

Uſe 3. *For terrour to thoſe that come unpreparedly.* 169
Obiect. *Do all that come unworthily eat and drink their own damnation?* 172
Anſw. *A man may eat and drink his own damnation three ways.* 173
1. *In regard of guilt and liableneſs to Gods wrath.* 173
2. *In regard of the ſeal and obligation in the Conſcience.* 173
3. *In regard of the ſigillation in Heaven.* 173
*Laſtly, the concluſion, denouncing terrour to all thoſe that dare ruſh upon his holy ordinance.* 174
*But for comfort to all them, who with all diligence ſet upon the preparing of their ſouls for this great Ordinance.* 175

The Contents of the ſeventh Sermon on 2 *Cor.* 11. 28.

The words of the Text explained. 178
Doct. 1. WE *muſt not ruſh upon the Sacrament.* 178
*There are none of the ordinances of God that a man may ruſh upon without examination.* 179
Three Reaſons. *Naturally we are no invited gueſts to the Sacrament.* 180
2. *Though we are invited, yet it may be we are not diſpoſed: for, naturally we are Srangers to God, and the covenant of God; all this indiſpoſition muſt be wrought off, before we can come comfortably to the Sacrament.* 180
3. *This is a ſolemn Ordinance, and therefore an ordinary diſpoſition will not ſerve the turn.* 181
*Many a reprobate may eat and drink in Chriſts preſence.* Uſe.

# The Contents.


Uſe. *To forewarn men, leſt they unpreparedly ruſh upon any of Gods ordinances, eſpecially upon the Sacrament of the body and blood of Chriſt.* 182

The Text divided into four parts. 183

Doct. 2. *There is a neceſſity that we ſhould receive the Lords Supper, and receive it often.* 184

Doct. 3. *The manner of performance of duties is to be regarded.* 185

Five Reaſons. 1. *The Lord commands the manner as well as the matter.* 186

2. *Circumſtances overthrow actions, if they be not rightly and duly obſerved.* 187

*It is inſtanced*
1. *In Prayer.* 187
2. *In preaching.* 188
3. *In receiving the Sacrament.* 188
4. *In brotherly reproof.* 188
5. *In eating, drinking, & marrying.* 189

3. *Becauſe only the right manner of doing duties gets the bleſſing.* 190

4. *Becauſe Chriſt himſelf is an example unto us, in this he did not only obey his Father in the matter of his commands, but in the manner of them.* 191

5. *Becauſe otherwiſe we cannot glorifie God.* 192

Uſe 1. *Firſt, to condemn that natural property that is in the heart of men,* &c. 194

Uſe 2. *For diſcovery why people are ſo willing to do duties for the matter and not for the manner.* 196

The reaſons of it are theſe:

1. *Becauſe the matter of the duty is eaſie, but the manner is difficult.* 196

2. *Duties for the matter of them, may be done with a proud heart.* 198

3. *They may be done with an unholy life.* 199

4. *The matter of duty bringeth not the croſs; and ma-*


*ny*

*ny zealous for the matter, are persecutors of goodnes.* 200
Use 3. *To exhort men to labour to perform duties aright.* 201
Three motives to perswade people to perform duties after a right manner.
1. *Because no Ordinance at all else can be effectual unto us.* 202
2. *All is but hypocrisie if the manner be not regarded.* 203
3. *It is only the right manner of doing duties that pleaseth God.* 203
4 Doct. *Every man must prepare himself before he come to the Lords Table.* 203
4 Reas. 1. *Because the Sacrament is Gods Ordinance.* 204
2. *Because the Lord Christ hath made great preparation in providing it.* 204
3. *Because Christ in this ordinance offers to come into the soul, & he looks for good entertainment.* 208
4. *Because the Sacrament is a part of Christs last will and testament, therefore when we know our Lords will, we must prepare for the doing of it.* 209

The Contents of the eighth Sermon upon *Proverbs* 29. 1.

1. A double exposition of the Text.
1 Doct. *From the first exposition,* viz. *He that reproveth another, and is guilty himself in the same kind, or in any other kind, and hardneth his own heart in it, that man shall be destroyed without remedy.* 213
7 Reasons. 1. *Because the office of a Reprover binded him to be blameless.* 213
2. *Be-*

# The Contents.


2. *Because such a Reprover as is guilty himself, can never Reprove to a right end.* 214
3. *Neither can he do it in a right manner.* 215
4. *Such a Reprover is an hypocrite.* 216
5. *Such a Reproving of another mans sin, makes him inexcusable in his own.* 217
6. *It is an absurd thing for a person to Reprove another for that whereof he is guilty himself.* 217
7. *Such a Reproving is a sign of impenitency.* 218
Object. *Shall not a wicked Magistrate or Minister Reprove others?* &c. 218
Ans. *He is bound to Reprove in regard of his office; but is bound in conscience to amend himself first.* 218
Use. *For instruction: first, Let every Reprover take heed, lest he make himself inexcusable.* 219
2. *Let him endeavour to walk unblameable and inoffensive.* 220
Two Doctrines from the second Exposition of the words, *viz.* 223
Doct. 1. *The Lord doth not destroy man willingly, but for sin.* 224
Doct. 2. *It is a great mercy for a man to be Reproved for his sin.* 224
Three Reasons of the second Doctrine.
1. *Because Reproofs primarily come from love.* 225
2. *They tend to the good of a mans soul.* 227
3. *It is brutish not to take Reproofs in good part.* 228
Use 1. *First for information, That God is bringing destruction upon a Kingdom, when he takes away Reprovers from them.* 228
Use 2. *For the Reproof of those that despise the Reproof of the wise; they despise not men, but God.* 229
*The grievousness of their sin who stand out against Reproof, is aggravated under several heads.* 232


Doct. 3.

# The Contents.


Doct. 3. *The Lord proportions punishments to mens sins.* 233

Reason 1. *Because hereby a mans punishment appears to be so much more equal and worthy.* 233

2. *This stops mens mouths, and convinceth their consciences.* 234

3. *All the standers-by may see the equity of it, when the punishment is according to the sin.* 235

Use for instruction.

*First, to teach men not to complain of Gods dealing with them, if their punishment be (for the kind of it) according to their sin, but rather let them learn to see Gods immediate hand in it.* 236

2. *To teach men to consider how God many times proportions punishments to sins:* 236

1. *For Kind.* 236
2. *For Quantity.* 237
3. *For Quality.* 238
4. *For time.* 238
5. *For Place.* 239


THE

# *The Authors* Preface *upon these ensuing* Sermons.

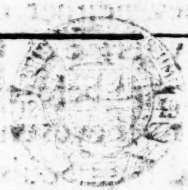
THe cause of that little Heavenlinesse which is in the profession of Christianity, *is the want of Meditation.* Many can meditate *cursorily*, but that is not enough: it must be a sticking Meditation that must affect the heart. That place in 2 *Pet.* 2. 8. is marvellous pregnant, it was the means why *Lot* was touched with the Abominations of *Sodom*: *That righteous man dwelling amongst them, in seeing and hearing their ungodly Deeds, vexed his righteous Soul from day to day.* Many heard and saw too, besides *Lot*, and were not vexed. Why? Other matters stuck in their Thoughts,

Thoughts, they never throughly meditated on it; but he vexed himself, that is, the Meditation of those Evils, and bringing them home to his Soul, vexed him. The Word is a fit Word, implying two Things: First, The *Searching and Examining* of a Thing, his Meditating Heart Examined their Sins; How many they were, how Grievous, how Damnable, how likely to pull down some Vengeance or other upon them. Secondly, The *wracking or vexing upon tryal*; so it was with *Lot*, he observed all their Evils, and weighed them in his Soul, and then he wracked his Spirit with the Consideration of them. The Evangelist useth this very Word for *tossing*: This Word that is here put for *vexing*, he puts for tossing of a Ship on the Seas, *Mat.* 14. 24. *The Ship was tossed with the Waves*: So Meditation did tosse his Soul with Vexation, sometimes down to the Deep. O miserable Wretches that we are! Or, How brutish, how beastly, and how hellish are our sins? Sometimes up; O that the Lord would Humble us, and Spare us! Sometimes over Head and Ears in the Storm: O Fool that I was to chuse my Dwelling amongst such Men: These Meditations vexed his Soul. Many have studied Meditations,

ditations, and yet are not acquainted with this Cordial Meditation: Many Miniſters that ſtudy Divinity all the day, that ſtudy the Word all the Week, that ſtudy their Sermons all the Year, may yet for all this, be carnal Miniſters. Why? Becauſe their Meditation is but inventing and mental Meditation; this Meditation is a practical Meditation, the thing meditated feeds the Heart: that meditation is like a fluttering Pheaſant that flutters before their Eyes, it feeds their eyes indeed, but never feeds the ſtomach, as long as they neither catch nor eat it. The ſaving Myſteries of God flutter before their eyes, and before their underſtandings they feed their eyes with knowledge, but never feed their Souls unto Everlaſting Life, unleſs they fowl for it, dreſs and digeſt it in their hearts. There is an apt Word, *Gen.* 24. 63. Iſaac *went out to meditate in the Field*: The Original hath it, to ſignifie *mutual conference*, his mind conferred with the truth, and the truth with him; a mutual working he wrought upon the truth, by meditating of it, and it wrought upon him; by leaving an impreſſion upon his Soul: This is a rare Practice in the world, and yet as neceſſary as moſt, it is the Art of the ſoul in being heavenly, it is the inuring of thee to every good Duty:

For

For by Meditation a man comes to have his heart fixed upon every thing that he would: Would he pray? he that hath inured his heart to meditate, his mind is fixed in his Prayer. Would he receive the Sacrament? He that hath inured his heart by meditation, his mind is fixed in the Ordinance. *David* that was excellent at meditation, had a *fixed Heart*, *Psalm* 57. 7. *Psalm* 112. 17.



THE

John Hodges own this Boock 1

A

# SERMON

Of the Use and Benefit of

## Divine Meditation.

HAGGAI I. 5.

*Now therefore, saith the Lord of Hosts, Consider your ways.*

THe Prophet reproveth the People because they could find in their hearts to mind their own houses, and yet were careless of the house of the Lord: the Lord had sent a drought and a Famine, and sundry punishments upon them for this thing, and yet they laid it not to heart; and therefore he sends *Haggai* the Prophet unto them, to call them to repentance; and (which is an admirable course, and little thought of in the world) he begins with holy meditation, and consideration: Now therefore thus saith the Lord, *Consider your ways:* that is, both in regard of the course of them, your wicked ways, and also in regard of the bitter fruit of them, your wretched and unprosperous

prosperous ways. Here be two things very remarkable, according to the Text.

1. The *Repetition* and inforcing of it again; for he urgeth it again, *Consider your ways*, in ver. 7.

2. The *Benefit* that came by it; it brought them to repentance; for *they all obeyed the voice of the Lord, and the words of the Prophet*, ver. 12. So that the Doctrine from hence is this:

*Doct.* 1. That, *Serious meditation of our sins by the Word, is a special means to make men repent.*

Meditation is a setled exercise of the mind, for a further inquiry of the truth, and so affecting the heart therewith, and therefore there be four things in Meditation.

1 The first is an exercise of the mind, not barely closing with the truth, and assenting unto it, and seeing it and there rests; but it looketh on every side of the truth: *I thought upon my ways, and turned my feet unto thy Testimonies*, Psal. 119. 59. saith *David*: that is, I looked on my ways on both sides, above and beneath; it's taken from curious works, which are the same on both sides, so that they which work them must often turn them on every side; used *Exod.* 38. 23. as being works with two faces, as one well observes: so it was with *David*, *I turned my ways up-side down, and looked every way upon them*: Thou never meditatest, unless thou look on thy ways on both sides with all circumstances. An elegant phrase we have, *Dan.* 12. 24. *Many shall run to and fro, and Knowledge shall abound and be increased*, (*Run to and fro*) What is that? It is not the bodily removing of man from one place to another so much, as busie stirring of the mind from one truth to another, so that it seeth the whole selvedge and com-

compaſs of the truth: thou wilt never get the truth to be meditated of, till thou run to & fro in it, meditate it on this ſide, and meditate it on that ſide, look on it in every nook of it. Meditation is like perambulation, when men go the bounds of the Pariſh, they go in every part of it, and in every skirt of it: ſo meditation is the perambulation of the Soul, when the Soul looks how far ſin goes, how far the fleſh goes, how far the wrath of God againſt it goes.

*Secondly*, As it is an Exerciſe, ſo it is a ſetled exerciſe, it is not a ſudden flaſh of a man's conceit, but it dwells upon a truth. When a man is in a deep meditation upon a thing he neither ſees nor hears, nor attends any thing elſe: the ſtream of the heart is ſetled upon the truth received: *The word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the world.* 1 John 2. 14. How came theſe young men to overcome Satan? Not by looking into the word, or only thinking of the word, but by letting the word abide in them. When a man hath been offered an injury, his heart is always ſetled upon it; when he eats, his mind runs on the injury; when he walks and talks, ſtill his mind runs on the injury: ſo thy heart muſt go on the truth, 2 *Tim.* 3. *Continue in the things thou haſt learned:* That is, Take up thy manſion houſe in them. A wicked man may turn into the word ſometimes, to think of it, but it is as a man goes into another man's houſe, there is not his dwelling. 2.

*Thirdly*, It is to make a further inquiry: Meditation doth not only ſettle upon the truth known, but it alſo would fain know more of thoſe truths, that are ſubject to it; as a man without may ſee 3.

the out-side of the house, but he cannot see the rooms within, unless he come nigh, and draw the latch, and come into the house, and go into the rooms, and look about them. Meditation pulls the latch of the truth, and looks into every closet, and every cupboard, and every angle of it. Here is my sin, here is my uncleanes, and here is God's anger, here is the woful evil that will follow upon it, and here is a remedy against it. Meditation searches into all the lofts and closets of the truth. *The entrance of thy word giveth understanding unto the simple*, Psal. 119. 30. The ingress (as one expounds it) or going into thy word, gives understanding; the wicked stand looking upon the truth without the doors, but it is the ingress, or going into the truth, that gives understanding. Indeed the truth is like a neat Palace, (saith *Chrisostom*) the Spirit of God is like the light of the Sun that shineth into it; the wicked they stand without, like Fools, peeping in at the windows, and there be many thousand of pearls that are not manifest unto them: The house seems dark to them that stand without: Thou must enter into the word, and into every particular truth in it; and go up stairs, and down stairs; and have an eye into every room: there thou shalt find humility, there contrition, there conversion, there Christ and his Spirit in one closet, there all his Jewels in that, and that box; all is manifest within doors.

4. *Fourthly*, It labours to affect the heart: it doth not only labour to know more and more of the truth, but also it labours to bring it home to the heart; *The good woman considers a field and buys it*, Prov. 31. 16. This is (saith *Ambrose*) the good Christian-Soul, if in civility, then much more in Divinity,

nity, he conſiders the truth, and buys it, he taketh it for his own, and apropriates it unto himſelf; *Lo this* (ſaith *Eliphas*) *we have ſearched out: So it is, hear it, and know it for thy ſelf*, Job. 5. 27. When thou canſt ſay of the truth; Loe this it is we have ſearched it out; I have dived into it, peruſed it, ſo it is, even ſo indeed: all this is, that thou mayeſt apply it unto thy ſelf, and know it for thy good.

*Reaſ.* 1. The firſt Reaſon is, becauſe Meditation muſters up all weapons, and gathers all forces of arguments for to preſs our Sins, and lay them heavy upon the heart: This uſury is ſpiritual and good, when Meditation, like Uſurers, who grind and ſuck the blood of the needy, and are not content with their principal, but will have conſideration for every pound they lay out; yea, for every ſhilling, and that for every week, and every month, and every quarter, and every year: the poor man could be content to pay the principal, but to exact uſe upon uſe, this kills him: ſo meditation exacteth upon the ſoul, and holdeth it to uſe upon uſe. You have committed evil in a corner, but you ſhall not carry it away ſo. Item, *It was againſt the knowledge of God revealed*: Item, *Againſt many mercies received*: Item, *Againſt many judgements threatned, againſt many checks of conſcience, againſt many vows and promiſes*: Remember that, O my ſoul. Item, *for that*, and Item, *for this*: Item *for every luſt, and every circumſtance, thus oft, and in this place, and at that time, in that manner*: So meditated the Prodigal. Luke 15. 17. Look as it is in wars, were there but many ſcores come againſt an Army, they might be conquered: or many hundreds, they might be reſiſted; but if many thouſands ſhould come againſt a ſmall Army, it

would be in danger indeed. Meditation leaveth a whole Army of arguments, a whole Army of curses, miseries, judgements, commandements against the Soul: however, one misery or plague will not knock it down, but the soul may brook it, and go away with it: but Meditation brings a great *Armado* of arguments, & tells the soul, God is against thee and against thy ways: God is against thee where ever thou art, or what ever thou doest. Then the heart begins to cry out, as *Elisha* his servant did, *Master, what shall we do?* 2 Kings 6. 15. So many horses against us, so many chariots, and so many men against us? *Master what shall we do?* so many sins, and so haynous, so many judgements, and so heavy, and so many evils and spiritual maladies! Oh! what shall I do to be saved? that I should commit sin against a God that hath damned innumerable Angels, millions of Kings, Princes, and Nobles, that I should commit it against this God, so merciful to me, so gracious, so patient, so good to my soul! that I, wretched rebel, should for a cup of drink refuse heaven! for a lust not worth a straw under my foot, cast off Christ, and grace, and all! how shall I do? Then the soul stands in a maze.

The second Reason is, because Meditation having bundled up all *Items* against the Soul, and brought in all bills of account, it fastens sin upon the Soul; I mean, it makes the soul feel it, so that it must needs be convinced without any evasion. Meditation deals with a man as *Elisha* dealt with the Messengers of King *Ioram*, the murderer was coming to do mischief to the Prophet, and the Prophet did shut the door, and held him fast at the door, 2 *Kings* 6. 32. and then he made him know

that

that the evil was from the Lord, before he could ſtir: ſo meditation, when the ſoul would fain out of doors into its old courſe again, it ſhuts the door upon it, and holds it faſt: Meditation tells the ſoul this evil is from the Lord, upon thee, O my ſoul, if thou ſtir in, or out, upon this, or that luſt any more, this evil, that curſe, that vengeance and damnation; if ever thou ſtir forth, thou loſeſt thy mercy, thou loſeſt Chriſt, thou loſeſt all poſſibility of comfort, Stir not out, if thou doſt, thou wilt rue it. Sometimes when men hear the word, they go away touched, they reſolve not to commit ſin again as they have done; yet when they are gone, it works not, but the heart recoyls again, and turns to its old paſs. The reaſon is, becauſe they meditate not not upon the Word, they faſten it not upon their conſciences.

It is with the word, as it is with a Salve; if a man that hath never ſo good a ſalve that will heal any thing in four and twenty hours, if a man ſhould do nothing but lay it to the wound, and take it off, lay it on, and take it off, it will not heal the wound: and no marvel, Why? He will not let it lye on; the beſt Salve will not heal the ſoar, nor eat out the corruption, unleſs it be bound on, and let lye: So it is with the Word, many a ſoul hears it, heart, conſcience, affections all toucht: but when he is gone out of the Church, all is gone, his affections dye, his heart dyes, and his conſcience becomes unfruitful. Why? he is ſtill removing of the Salve, and will not let it lye on, and therefore the word over-powers not his corruptions; the Word is like the Salve, Conviction of Conſcience is like the laying on of the Salve, Meditation the binding of it to the ſoar.

St. *James* compares a ſlight hearer, to a man that looks into a glaſs, who ſoon forgets his viſage, but a good hearer doth two things: Firſt, *he ſtoops down, and looks into it*, to take a perfect view of his eſtate: Secondly, *he continues looking into it*, *James* 1.25. he doth not leave the glaſs behind him, but he carrieth away the Glaſs with him; *This man ſhall be bleſſed in his deed.*

If the Pills be never ſo bitter, yet let a man ſwallow them ſpeedily, there is no great diſtaſte, but if a man chew a Pill, it would make him deadly ſick. Thy ſins are like theſe Pills, they go down very pleaſingly, becauſe thou ſwalloweſt them; thou ſwalloweſt down thine oaths lyes, ignorance, pride; thou ſwalloweſt down the threats of the Lord; but if thou wouldſt chew theſe bitter Pills, meditate and ruminate, and chew the cud, drunkenneſs would be as bitter as hell, ſwearing, and ſecurity, and Sabath-breaking, would be as bitter as wormwood: thou durſt not go on in them, they would make thee look ſourly upon them for ever: like a man that hath chewed a pill, he can hardly ever ſee a Pill, but his ſtomach riſeth againſt it. *Behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns*, Hoſ. 2. 6. I will not be ſo preciſe (ſaith the heart) I will go on as I have done, I will go after theſe and theſe courſes; *I will hedge up thy way with thorns* ſaith God;) Meditation is God's inſtrument, and ſets a thorn in the way to every ſin, to bring the heart back again. Would the heart laſh out into lukewarmneſs? Meditation ſets a thorn in the way; *God will ſpue thee out of his mouth*: Would the heart ſally forth into any Sin? Meditation ſets a thorn in the way. *Curſed art thou if thou doſt err from God's Commandements.*

The

he heart cannot ſtep forth into any luſt, but Meditation meets it with a thorn, this curſe, and that curſe, this plague, and that plague. Would the heart reach at mercy in its ſin? Meditation pricks it from it: Mercy is vengeance unto thee, ſo long as thou hankreſt after ſin: Would the heart reach after Chriſt in his ſin? Meditation puſhes it back with a thorn; no Chriſt for thee, but a ſevere judge, ſo long as thou itcheſt after thy vanities.

What ſhall we think of them then, which are loath to practice this Duty? Moſt men are loath, though they be willing enough to meditate on their worldly affairs. The Marriner meditates and conſiders his courſe by his Compaſs, or elſe he might ſoon run on the quick-ſands; a Pilgrim is full of thoughts, what! *am I in my right way?* He never comes to a doubtful turning, but he ſtands in a ſtudy and muſes, O which is my right way? The Merchant Meditates, and his mind runs on his *Count-book*, or elſe he is ſoon *Bankrupt*: The Voluptuous man, his thoughts run on his pleaſures, the Drunkard on his cups, and the proud man on his credit. But it is one thing to look to that which is thine, and another thing to look to thy ſelf; *Take heed to your ſelves*, ſaith the Lord, *Deut.* 11.16. and 12.30. and 4.9. *Ex.* 34.12. As if he ſhould ſay, *Think on thy ſelf, and of thy poor ſoul, let thy Meditation run on thy poor ſoul.* The heart is untoward unto this duty, and as unwilling as a Bear to be brought to the ſtake: the Bear would rather be rambling abroad, then be baited: ſo men had rather let their hearts ramble about any thing, then bait them for their ſins; yea, men ſcoff at it, ſaying; *Shall we always be poring on our ſins? ſhall we run mad? ſhall we drive*

*Uſe* 1.

*our ſelves to diſpair? cannot men keep themſelves well while they are well?* The Poor man he hath no time for this tedious duty: the rich man, he needs it not; the wicked they dare not; ſo no man will: *No man repented of his wickedneſs, ſaying; What have I done? Ier.* 8. 6. No man would Meditate, and think with himſelf, What is my caſe? how ſtands my condition before God? what evil have I done? In the Ark, and in the Old Law, if there were any Beaſt that chewed not the cud, it was a ſign of an unclean Beaſt: The word implies the bringing up of their meat into their own mouths again, and ſitting down to chew it again. But now men like unclean Beaſts, ſwallow down the food of their ſouls unchewed, and will not meditate thereof, that it may turn to good nutriment; but like Cormorants, they take it down by whole-ſale, and are never the better. So the Word is to them, as the Quails to the *Iſraelites*, while the fleſh was yet between their teeth, e're it was chewed, the wrath of the Lord was kindled againſt them, and ſmote them with a very great plague, *Numb.* 11. 33. So the word of God ſticks in their teeth, e're they chew it, or meditate upon it; the wrath of God falls upon them, and ſtrikes them with a very great plague of hardneſs of heart, and leaneſs of ſoul. But the truth is, you that will not now ſee your ſins, nor meditate on them, you ſhall ſee them, and meditate on nothing but on fear, *Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not ſee, but they ſhall ſee and be aſhamed*, Eſay 26. 11.

Now the *lets* of Serious Meditation are;

*Let* 1. *Firſt*, *Vain Company*. When *Peter* ſaw the people touched, *Acts* 2. 37. he ſaid unto them,

*Save*

*Save your ſelves from this untoward generation*, v. 40. As if he ſhould ſay, If you love your ſelves, God hath touched your hearts, ſuffer not Satan and theſe wicked inſtruments, to ſteal away theſe impreſſions of terror from your ſouls. If ever you love your ſouls, ſort not your ſelves with this untoward Generation. See, as it humbles you, ſo let Meditation follow upon it, ſo that it may ſtill humble you. Ill company brings a man to the Gallows, (as the Proverb is) and ill company will bring a man to hell (ſay I:) and Meditation cannot be admitted to it. *David* would not have a wicked man to abide in his ſight, when he was to Meditate, he wiſht that there were never a wicked man in the world; much leſs, would he keep company with them. *My Meditation of him ſhall be ſweet; let the ſinners be conſumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more: Bleſs thou the Lord, O my ſoul*, Pſal. 104. 35.

The ſecond *Let* is, *Multitude of worldly buſineſſes. A Dream* (ſaith *Solomon*) *comes through multitude of buſineſſes*, *Eccl.* 5. Multitude of buſineſſes, cauſeth the mind ſo to run on them that they do even dream of them in their ſleep, as *Lucretius*, *Seneca*, *Claudian*, and many other of the Heathens have obſerved. He that over-imployes himſelf, his Meditations of heaven, are dreaming meditations, his thoughts, dreaming thoughts; he can never ſeriouſly meditate on the good of his ſoul. Many ingroſs buſineſſes into their hands, never thinking they have enough, they are ſo greedy after the world, and ſo careleſs of Heaven. So they make their hearts like High-way ground: the word ſown in their hearts, is like ſeed ſown in the High-way, where

*Let* 2.

where is such a through-fare, and a broad Carrie
road of earthly affirs, that all the Word and M
ditation thereof is troden down as the grass in t
highway, which cannot grow: so neither Meditat
on in a busie-bodied heart: For a good meditatin
mind, (*Nemo ad illam pervenit occupatus*, saith *Senec*
no man ever came to it surfeited with imployment
*David*, although he had abundance of State affair
both his hands full, yet he would not have his hand
to be over-charged, but that he might meditate i
Gods word: *My hands also* (not all down to busi
nes only in the world, but also up to thy Law
*will I lift up to thy Commandements which I have lo
ved and I will meditate on thy statutes*, Psal. 119 48
Take not too much upon thee, like those graspin
worldlings, that will have a finger in a hundre
things: *Martha, Martha, thou art cumbred about ma
ny things, but one thing is needful, and* Mary *hath cho
sen the better part*, Luke 10. 41. And what was tha
*one thing? Mary* was sitting and Meditating in, an
pondring Christ's word; not (as *Theophylact* ex
pounds it) as if he would say, *Martha, Martha
thou art cumbred about many dishes, but one thing
needful, only one dish:* though indeed so it be, yet h
here speaks not only of one dish, but of many care
that hinder that one necessary Duty of hearing
and meditating on the word of God.

3. *Thirdly*, *Ignorance.* A Man cannot Meditate o
a thing he knows not, nor thou of thy sins, if tho
be not skilful in God's Catalogue of thy sins; no
of mercies and promises, if thou beest not verst i
them; nor of his Precepts, if thou be not expert i
them. The Psalmist proveth that he had mor
knowledge then all his Teachers: Why? Becaus
h

e used to meditate. *I have more understanding then all my Tutors, for thy Testimonies are my Meditation,* Psal. 119. 99.

*Fourthly*, *Averseness of the heart*: The heart is like the Swine, Meditation is like the yoke: the hog would fain get into forbidden fields, for to grub them, the yoke that hinders him, but he cannot abide it, every step he takes, he lifts up his foot to strike it off, if he could; so the heart would fain break through hedges, and get into forbidden ways, and if thou wouldst meditate, it would every moment lift up its heel to put thee besides it, If it cannot put thee besides it, it will mar it if it can, and therefore *David* prayed to God to settle his heart upon the right, and put his yoke upon him, or it would never be stedfast else upon meditation. *Let the words of my mouth, and the meditations of my heart, be ever acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my Redeemer*, Psal. 19. 14. 4.

This *Averseness of the heart* consists in three things.

*First*, In *the carelessness of the heart*: The heart prizeth not Meditation, nor the things of Grace, that are to be meditated on; it will not be at the cost and charge, nor at the pains for them. *To what end is a price in the hands of a fool, seeing there is no heart to get wisdom?* Prov. 17. 16. The heart will not be brought to God's price, it would fain have the Wares at a cheap rate. 1.

*Secondly*, In *runnings of it*: The heart is like a Vagrant Rogue, he would rather be hanged, then tyed to his Parish. Thou canst not bring it to Prayer, but it will be a gadding on by-thoughts; thou canst not bring it to a Sermon, but it will be 2.

ro-

roving after wandring imaginations; thou can not bring it to a Meditation, but it will be a gos siping forth. When Christ came to bind men with his blessed cords, and bind their hearts to him, *Psal.* 2. they fall a meditating afterwards, but it was meditating, and imagining vain things, *ver.* 1. and when they saw they were to be tyed up; *Tush* (say they) *let us break their bonds asunder, and cast their cords from us*, ver. 3. What, do Ministers call us to such strictness, thinking to imprison our hearts in their stocks? away with their bonds, no, we will have none of it.

3. *Thirdly*, In *the weariſomneſs of the heart*: It is as weary of meditation as a Cur is of the whip, and the chain; Oh how it barks and maunders, till it be loose! yea, though it be never so eager upon it at the first, it's jaded presently. When God called the *Jews* to sanctifie his Name, they thought in their hearts; *O what a wearineſs is this! and ye have ſnuffed at it, (ye brought that which was lame, and torn, and ſick*, Mal. 1. 13. What a wearineſs is it to meditate, saith the heart: It snuffs, it is untoward, it is lumpish, it would fain tear off a piece of the duty, or bring it wanting a leg, or without soundness and sincerity; yet some of them (saith *Calvin*) were so humbled, that they thought on the name of the Lord, *Mal.* 3. 16. they thought and meditated, and forced their hearts to consider throughly.

*Uſe* 2. This may serve for terror unto all those, who, for all this that hath been spoken, dare sit down without it; yea, the world will not believe these things, nor meditate therein; yea, they blame God's Messengers, that call so sore upon them. *Habakkuk*

was

was ſo ſerved; he preached the mercies of God to the humble, and the judgements of God to the wicked: they ask him why he was ſo mad: Well (ſays the Prophet) *I will ſtand upon my watch, and ſee what the Lord ſays unto me, that I may anſwer to them that reprove me*, Hab. 2. 1. What did the Lord tell him? *Write the Viſion, and make it plain upon Tables, that he may run that reads it*, ver. 2. Will they not believe? will they rove? will they not meditate ſteadily upon theſe things? will they not let their hearts ſtay and meditate and conſider? The Viſion ſhall be ſo plain, that he that runs may read it. If thou wilt not ſtay, and meditate herein, the Word is ſo plain to thy condemnation, that if thou didſt but think of it with a running thought, thou maiſt read thine own vengeance, thine own woes, in regard of the multitude of them. He that runs by a way full of holes and pits, though he ſtand not meditating where are the pits, yet he may run and ſee them. The Book of God is full, leaves, and cover, and all, of woes againſt thee, *Lam.* 2. 10. It is written without, there thou mayſt read thy ſins written; it is written likewiſe within, there thou mayſt read thy plagues.

*Secondly*, In regard of the greatneſs of them, he that runs along, and ſee a great town on fire, though he ſtay not to meditate on it, what or where it is, yet he may run and read it: ſo is the curſe of ſinners a great curſe, *Zeph.* 1. 10. He that runs may read it.

*Thirdly*, In regard of the proximity and neerneſs of them. He that runs, if a ſword come out at his throat, though he do not ſtop to meditate, what is this at my throat, yet he cannot but ſee it.

Be-

*Behold the Judge ſtandeth before the door*, Jam. 5. 9. Take heed how thou grudgeſt or ſinneſt in any particular; behold the judge ſtandeth before the dore; behold it, and meditate on it with thy heart: if not, he is nigh enough, thou canſt not ſtep out of doors unto any ſin, but though thou runneſt, thou muſt needs ſee the Judge that will Judge thee, Iteming thy ſins, noting thy ways, obſerving thy courſes, ready to unhaſp the door on thee, to hale thee unto hell in thy ſins. Whoſe end is deſtruction? Whoſe? Even thoſe that mind earthly things, *Phil.* 3. 19. If thy mind and meditation run more on thy ground, chattel, goods, kitchen, houſe, buſineſs, earthly talk, diſcourſes, thoughts, more than of heaven, thy end is deſtruction: If thy thoughts will not ſtay here, do but run, and thou mayſt read it: *Think not that I am come to deſtroy the Law or the Prophets, I am come to fulfil them*, Mat. 5. 17. Some (ſaith *Chriſoſtom*) might think now Chriſt is come, it is no matter though we be not ſo ſtrict: Chriſt is enough: think not thus (ſaith Chriſt) but rather think and meditate that I am come to fulfil it my ſelf, and to ſee it fulfilled in thoſe I am to ſave, ſo as to make it the rule of their lives. *Themiſtocles* ſaid, he could not ſleep in his bed for continual thinking and meditating on *Miltiades* his Triumphs: And how canſt thou ſleep in thy bed, if thou wouldeſt but meditate upon theſe places of Scripture? Retire thy ſelf apart, there is no caſting up of a man's account in a crowd: *Let me alone, I am buſie*; ſo we uſe to ſay, when we would be private.

*Means* 1. Thou muſt do with thy ſoul as *Ehud* did to *Eglon*, who ſaid, *I have a ſecret Errand to thee, O King*

and

and ſo all went out, and he ſaid, *I have a meſſage from God to thee*, and ſo ſtab'd him at his heart, *Judg.* 3. 19. So (for *Ehud* was a Type of Chriſt, ſaith *Lavator*) *I have a ſecret errand to thee, O my ſoul*; and ſo let all go forth; *I have a meſſage from God to thee, a meſſage of wrath for thy Pride, a Meſſage of wrath for thy vain hopes*: Thus ſaith he Lord; *Curſed art thou, O my ſoul*; ſtab it to the heart with this ſpiritual Dagger, wound it with the blade and haft and all, till thou have let out the fat, and the dirt, the filth and iniquity all out. The Prophet ſpeaking of mens looking on Chriſt whom they have pierced, this meditating and laying to heart that they have crucified the Lord Jeſus, ſaith that *they ſhall mourn every one in private, the houſe of* David *apart, and their Wives apart; the houſe of* Nathan *apart, and their Wives apart; the houſe of* Shimei *apart, and their Wives apart; every Family apart, and their Wives apart*, Zach. 12. 2.

The ſecond means, if thou wouldeſt meditate aright, obſerve the time of privacy. *Means* 2.

*Firſt*, The morning, that is the beſt time for ſtudy: *David* choſe the morning for meditation, *Pſal.* 5. 1, 3. Let them hear this (ſaith *Chriſoſtom*) that riſe betimes in the morning to ſerve their Hogs and their Dogs, their bellies and their backs, before they ſerve God in meditation or prayer, unleſs it be the mumbling and roating a few (*Lord have mercy upon us*) that pray not till after many other buſineſſes, it may be not then neither. *David* prayed and meditated in the morning. In the morning thou waſheſt thy face and thy hands, but thy ſoul hath more need, which thou waſheſt not: in the morning thou putteſt thy cloaths on thy body, but thou 1.

putteſt not on afreſh, the new man upon thy ſoul; in the morning thou ſhakeſt off ſleepineſs from thine eyes, but thou ſhakeſt not off drowſineſs from thy ſoul. Thou lookeſt into the glaſs in the morning, to ſee if thy face be as it ſhould be, but thy ſoul is not compoſedly looking into the glaſs of God's word. In the morning look up in prayer, look up in thankſgiving, look up in meditation.

2. *Secondly*, The night too: *O Lord I meditate on thee in the night watches*, Pſal. 63. Not as carnal ones do, when they cannot ſleep, then their mind runs on their Cow and their Calf, their markets and vanities, this neighbour, and that neighbour, like *Petronius* his dog, that was hunting while he lay aſleep in his kennel.

3. *Thirdly In the evening, I prevent the night watches, that I might meditate*, Pſal. 119.148. He did not as wicked men do, ſleep like a horſe in the ſtable on his litter, with his neck tyed to the manger; they go to bed with their hearts roped to the world, worldly thoughts, this thought, and that thought, and God knows what.

4. *Fourthly*, When the heart is touched at a Sermon or Sacrament, or obſerving of any judgement or mercy, or act of God's providence, it is beſt ſtriking when the Iron is hot: *David* when his heart was touched at the reproaches of the wicked, then he meditated, *Pſal.* 119.23. When the Inſtrument is in tune, then it is good playing upon it; when a Churl is in a good mood, then it is fitteſt to deal with him. Oft will thy heart be out of tune, oft churliſh, and in an ill mood: if thou letteſt the good oportunity go, thou knoweſt not when thou ſhalt have ſuch another. When the fiſh is nibling at the bait,

bait, then it is good twitching at the angle rod, when the heart is a nibling at grace, then give a pluck at it by meditation, see *Acts* 10. 11. now while the tide lasts, see thou maist get into the haven.

*Thirdly*, Rub up thy self and thy memory; call as much to mind as thou canst, what evil thou hast done ever since thou wast born, what in the womb, what in the cradle, childhood, youth, age, what a Servant, what a Master; what as a Servant, what as a Son, what as a neighbour, what as an inferiour, what as a superiour either in thought, word, or deed; how often thou hast omitted good duties, or done them by halves; *Item* for this, and *Item* for that. They shall remember themselves, and turn unto the Lord, *Psal.* 22. 27. First, They shall remember themselves, and say, what have I done, O wretch! how carelesly have I lived! Secondly, so meditating, they shall turn unto the Lord. Many say, Oh! they cannot remember their sins: They lye in a thousand particulars, for they can remember to commit them well enough: See *Lam.* 3. 19, 20, 21. Our Greek translation turns it: *I spake to my self and meditated:* As if they should say, O what a rebel have I been! how unthankful, how unprofitable under all the means of Grace! I may thank my sins for all the plagues of the Almighty that are upon me: If he had damned me I had been well served. What follows? *The heart bowed, and was humbled*, as it is in the Text. *Means* 3

The fourth Means. Rouze up thy heart. As it is with the eye of the body, so it is with the eye of the soul: when a man would look wistly on a thing, he sets his eyes on it, as *Paul* set his eyes on *Elymas*, *Ah thou child of the Devil, thou*, &c. *Means* 4

*Act.*13.9. Meditation is the setting of the eye of the soul upon a thing: set thine eye upon thy self, and say, Ah thou child of the wicked, why hath Satan filled thy heart! O wretched heart! whence hadst thou thy self-love? hadst thou not it from the Devil? God might do well to send thee to the Devil, if thou lovest so to be his Broker. Set thine eyes stedfastly upon thine own ways, and thou shalt see infinite hellish evils in thy sins.

*Use* 3. The third use is for *Reprehension*. What is more usual than this, that men make slight account of their sins? Nay, when God tells them in their hearts. Thou shalt not do this, thou shalt not do that; yet they meditate and think, Why may I not? *Samuel* bid *Saul* stay for directions from him, before he sacrificed unto God. It seems that God spake to his heart: *Stay till* Samuel *comes to direct thee*: yet *Saul* forced himself to disobey, and to do sacrifice. 1 *Sam.*13.12. He was bold, as *Vatable* turns it: he confirmed himself, as *Pagnin* translates it: he thrust himself upon the doing of it; God forbad him, he would do it: God urged him in his conscience not to do it, yet he would do it, God again whispered to him not to do it, yet he forced himself to do it; as if he should say, I hope I may do it; I have stayed seven days wanting an hour, or a piece of an hour, and a little piece breaks no square. No? God rejected *Saul* for that venture: God would have forced him by meditation; O no, do it not by no means: he made him think, Oh it is against God's Commandements, I may not do it: No, but nevertheless he forced himself to do it. Thus God deals with thousands and millions in the world. Be not a drunkard; God

fling

flings the meditation into the conſcience, yet a drunkard thou wilt be; be not a drunkard again; a drunkard notwithſtanding thou wilt be: be not again, they force themſelves, they will go to the Ale-houſe. And ſo of all other ſins. If men will caſt off this work of meditation darted into their ſouls, they caſt off their own mercy. God tells them, pray not, hear not, offer not, without directions from me; they dread not the commandement, they will; I truſt prayers are good, I will ſay them. Thus they will not meditate, or if they do, they break it off before it comes to any ſtrength or perfection: yea, God's own ſervants, that deſire to look towards *Sion*, is not this your complaint oft? I cannot find ſin heavy: I confeſs the word diſcovers it to me, but I cannot be troubled for it. Look as it is with men in the world, if five hundred pounds weight be laid upon the ground, if a man never pluck at it, he ſhall never feel the weight of it. Your ſins are not many hundreds, but many thouſands, yea, many ten thouſands: ſelf-love, ſecurity, hardneſs of heart, baſe fears, &c. It is impoſſible to reckon them. The leaſt vain thought that ever you imagined, the leaſt vain word that ever you uttered, were weight enough to preſs your ſouls down to Hell. Therefore what are ſo many ſins, and ſo great, and ſo often committed? What are they? they are as heavy as rocks and mountains, yet ye feel them not ſo heavy. Why? ye weigh them not; if ye did, ye ſhould find them heavier than the ſand, as *David* did when his ſin was ever before him, (*Pſal.* 51. 3.) That is, his ſin was ever in his thoughts, and in his meditation, his ſin was ever like a huge milſtone before him, and he was ever tugging and pulling to remove it out of his way.

*Object.* I, but you will say, How shall I come to feel my burden?

*Answer.* I answer; Three things are here to be discovered.

First, *The ground upon which our meditation must be raised.*

Secondly, *The manner how to follow it home to the heart.*

Thirdly, *How to put life and power into it.*

The ground I defer to these four heads.

1. First, *Meditate on the goodness, patience, and mercy of God,* that hath been abused by any of your sins; the greater they have been to you, the greater is every sin: this maketh them out of measure sinful, because God is out of measure merciful. There are many sins in one, when a man sins against many mercies, see *Judg.* 2.2,3. *Why have ye done thus?* I have done thus and thus mercifully unto you: why have ye done thus unthankfully to me? why was my mercy abused? why was my goodness slighted? why was my patience despised? as if the Lord should say; I speak to your own conscience, think of it, meditate of it, why have ye done this? do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise? Is not he thy Father? Meditate of it first, and tell me then. For it is a question put to thy meditation to answer. Do ye thus requite the Lord ye foolish people? wert thou ever in want, but God supplyed thee, wert thou ever in weakness, but God strengthened thee? wert thou ever in straits, but God delivered thee? when thou wert in sickness, who cured thee? when thou wert in poverty, who relieved thee? when thou wert in misery, who succoured thee? hath not God been a gracious God to thee? Every soul can tell, never poor sinner hath had

had a more gracious God than I, poor ſinner have found to my ſoul. All my bones can ſay, Lord, who hath been like unto thee? this heart hath been heavy, and thou haſt cheered it; this ſoul hath been diſtreſſed, and thou haſt eaſed it; many troubles have befallen me, and thou haſt given me a gracious iſſue. *This poor man* (ſaith *David* pointing to himſelf) *cryed and the Lord heard him*, Pſal. 34. 6. And ſhall I thus reward the Lord? ſhall I ſin againſt his goodneſs? then what ſhall I ſay? Hear O Heavens, and hearken O Earth, Sun ſtand thou ſtill, and thou Moon be amazed at this, and be avenged on ſuch a heart as this. *The Oxe knoweth his owner, and the Aſs his Maſters Crib*, but here is a heart that will not remember to know the Lord. Hear O Heavens, this villany cryeth ſo loud, that your ears may hear it. Hear all ye Angels, and be aſtoniſhed, here is villany to make your ears glow: yea, hear hell, hear Devils, if ever there were worſe committed by you. When men are but *ingenuous*, if they have received any kindneſs from a friend, they were never in want but he relieved them; never harbourleſs, but he houſed them, never to ſeek, but he found them: let a man deal thus kindly with a man, if this man ſhould deny him any ordinary favour, he will be aſhamed of himſelf, aſhamed to come into his preſence. What will he think! his houſe was mine, his cupboard was mine, and his purſe was mine, and his friends were mine, and that I ſhould deal thus unkindly with him, even Nature rebukes me. This ſerious meditation will help to break thy heart.

The ſecond ground of meditation is to meditate on the juſtice of God: God is a juſt God, as well as 2.

merciful. Speak all ye Devils in hell, doe ye not feel that he is a juſt God? ſpeak *Sodom*, ſpeak *Gomorrah*, your fire and brimſtone can teſtifie that he is a juſt God: ſpeak *Adah*, *Zillah*, and all ye that were drowned in the old world, your deluge can teſtifie he is a juſt God; *His judgements are all in the world*, 1 Chron. 16.14. What is become of drunken *Nabal*, and ſwearing *Saul*, and covetous *Ahab*, and proud *Jezabel*, and mocking *Jehu*, and envious *Shimei*? What is become of all blind *Jebuſites*, and parting cavilling *Diotrepheſes*? Juſtice hath taken hold on them. What is poverty? what is nakedneſs? what is famine, ſickneſs, the gout, ſtone, feaver, plague? theſe are the little arrows of Gods juſtice. What is ſhame, diſgrace, croſſes, afflictious, unſeaſonable rains, dangerous weather, wars, rumours of wars? what are all the evils under the Sun? They are the little finger of God's juſtice; thou ſpieſt them here and there, in every Town, and in every Pariſh, in every Country: do they not all witneſs that he is a juſt God? read *Pſal.* 7. 11, 12 13. *God hath bent his bow already* (ſaith *David*) the arrow is ready to flye out of the ſtring: It will not be long before it hit thee, if thou meditate not upon amendment: *God is angry with the wicked every day*; as an angry man uſeth to ſay, I will be revenged on thee. Wilt thou not give over thy ſins? I will be revenged on thee, read *Pſal* 11. 5, 6, 7. Meditate on this; he will neither ſpare King nor Subject, nor rich, nor poor, nor noble, nor baſe, nor Judges, nor Juſtices: yet Judges and Juſtices may ſpare, but God will not ſpare; they may be bribed to pardon, but God will not be fee'd to ſpare them that go on in their wickedneſs; and do I think

to

to escape? Nay, my soul, thou canst never escape, except thou obeyest.

The third ground is, *Meditate on the wrath of God*: Oh! what wrath is it? Can I stand against it? *It burns like an Oven, and all the proud, and all that do wickedly shall be as stubble, and the day of wrath shall burn them up. Behold this*, saith the Text, *Mal.* 4.1. Behold it, and meditate on it: Can I go naked in a hot fiery *Oven*? can I lift up my hands against it? My hands will be scorched. Can I kick against it? my legs will be baked. Can I blow upon it with my mouth? my mouth is fired. Did I ever see Lime burned? were I in the Limes room, could I endure that boyling? and yet if I live in my sins, I shall be as the burning of Lime, *Isa.* 33.12. Let thy heart meditate terror: *Who amongst us shall be able to dwell* (that is the meaning of it, as *Montanus* sheweth) *who among us shall dwell with devouring fire? who among us shall burn with everlasting burnings?* ver. 14. God's mercy shall say; Take him Wrath, I would have converted him, but he would not: God's Goodness shall say, Take him wrath: I would have been kind unto him, but he hath abused me. God's Patience shall say; Take him Wrath, I have suffered him a great while that he might have time of repentance, but he repented not in that time. *God smote* Ægypt *in their first born*: Why? *For his mercy endureth for ever. God overthrew* Pharaoh *and his hoast*: Why? *For his mercy endureth for ever*, Psa. 136.15. *He smote great Kings*, Sihon *a King, and* Og *a King*; *for his mercy endureth for ever.* So will God damn thee, that art a Drunkard: Why? *For his mercy endureth for ever.* God will confound thee, that art a worldling: Why? *For his mercy* 3.

en-

*endureth for ever.* God will be revenged on thee that art a Luke-warmling: Why? *For his mercy endureth for ever.* This may well make thee tear the hair off thy head, rather than let thee go on in thy sins; see *Jer.* 7. 29. Meditate on this.

4. The fourth ground: *Meditate on the Constancy of God.* As the Lord was an enemy to wicked men, so he continues the same God still; a constant enemy to them still. As the Lord would not endure sin heretofore, so he is constant, he still will not endure it. Did the Lord once say, *Weep ye drunkards? Joel.* 1. 5. He is constant, so he saith still. Did the Lord say *he would burn up Sabath-breakers?* Jer. 17. 27. He is constant, so he saith still. *Who ever hardned his heart against the Lord, and prospered?* Job 9. 14. And if he should say, I put it to thee to meditate of it, canst thou shew me a president? did ever any man harden his heart against God's Word, in his sin, that prospered? did *Senacherib* prosper in his will-worship? did *Judas* prosper in his covetousness? did *Jeconiah* prosper in his stubbornes? where is the Scribe? where is the receiver? where is he that counted the Towers? *Your Fathers where are they?* saith *Zachary*: did not my words take hold of them? and are they not all now in hell, that have ever lived and dyed in their sin, from the beginning of the world? Thou canst not shew me one Drunkard, or one Mocker, or one prophain person, or one formal professor, from the day that man was created upon the earth, that is not now in hell, if he be dead. Meditate on this, how canst thou expect to be the one only in all the world that shall escape if thou livest and dyest in thy Sins? If hell were opened, and the bottomless-pit were lookt into

tho

hou ſhouldeſt ſee every ſoul that ever lived, and
yed in their ſins, even every ſoul, there is not one
oul miſſing. Meditate on this; when I dye, do I
hink I ſhall not be there? nay, I ſhall be there too,
nleſs aforehand I enter into the *ſtrait-gate*, and
alk in the *narrow-way* of newneſs of life.

The

# The Second SERMON

## Of the Use and Benefit of Divine Meditation.

HAGGAI 1. 5.

*Now therefore thus saith the Lord of Hosts, Consider your ways.*

NOw follows the manner how to follow Meditation home to the heart.

Here are four things to be practised.

First, *Weigh and ponder all these things in thy heart.* It's said of *Mary*, *She pondred*, Luke 2. 19. *and kept all these sayings in her heart*, ver. 51. The words signifie two things:

*First*, She compared these things together.

*Secondly*, She cast them all in the scales together Dost thou know God is merciful? ponder it with his Justice. Dost thou know that Jesus Christ dyed for sinners? ponder it with the true drift of it, how that it is not to let men go on in their sins, but to save them from their Sins: Dost thou obey God in this

this or that Commandment? O ponder thy life with the reſt; *Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be eſtabliſhed*, Prov. 4. 26. A man that eats his meat well, forty morſels well, yet one crum going awry throttles him. Thou walkeſt in theſe and theſe Commandments; yea, but there be other Commandments beſides theſe: doſt thou walk in them too? thou muſt, if thou meaneſt to have thy ways to be eſtabliſhed. The *Jews* had their *continers*, *talents*, *min's*, *ſicles*, which were greater weights; ſo they had alſo their *Gerahs*, and *Agorahs*, ſmaller meaſures, and ſmalleſt of all: ſo have thou greater and leſs weights; great ones to ponder the great Commandments, and leſs to weigh even the leaſt of Gods Commandments, and ſee thou make true *Evangelical* weight, or elſe all will not be well. Suppoſe a man were to pay 100 pound of good and lawful money, and in weight, upon forfeiter of all that he hath, if he weigh it not, but the Creditor doth, and finds it light, he is undone. If thou pondreſt not thy ways, God will ponder them, *Prov.* 5. 21. The word ſignifies, *he weighs and ponders them in a ballance or Scales*: he puts the word of his Goſpel in the one, and thy goings and obedience in the other. *Thou art weighed, and art found too light, thy Kingdom is departed from thee*, ſaith the Lord to *Belſhazzar*, Dan. 5. 27. So if thou be light thou ſhalt be weighed, and ſo found, thou ſhalt loſe the Kingdom of heaven for ever.

Secondly, *Strip Sin, and look upon it ſtark naked.* Sin covers and diſguiſeth it ſelf with pleaſure, profit, eaſe, and many a whoriſh Garment, and ſo intiteth the heart: even a toad, if ſhe were covered over with gold, thoſe that ſaw only the gold, would

would pocket it up, if it were naked they would fling it in the kennel. Why do men love covetousnes? Why, it's hooded with profit: Why, carding, dicing, hunting hawking, tabring, piping, and more than the word alloweth? Why? they are cloathed with pleasure and delight. It's the duty of Ministers to unmask and uncase Sin, and pluck off the vail that covers it from appearing unto men. The not doing of this is the cause that men do not meditate on the vileness of their sins, never are humbled, never escape Gods wrath, even because they do not discover mens iniquities, *Lam.* 2. 14. Alas, the profit of thy sins shall cease, the pleasure cease, the ease cease, and all these goodly suits shall vanish away, when the soul comes to dye, or to stand before the judgement-seat of Christ: Sin will remain, but thy silver and thy gold, where will that be then? thy laughter and thy merriment, what will become of that then? thy delight will be gone. Meditate therefore with thy self, my Sin is now gainful, and easie, and pleasant, but what will my Sin become, when I come to lye on my death-bed? what good will it do me, when I have most need of succour? I will never acknowledge him my friend, that will turn against me when I have most need of him. Alas, I must dye; I must come to Judgement; I must go either to heaven, or to hell: the profit that I get now by my sins, will it bestead me then? the pleasure, the ease that I now find in Sin, will it help me there? Alas, no, it will then be my break-neck, it will be a Devil unto me: the more I have been delighted with it, the more it will gall me; the more I have gotten by it, the more it will damn me;

me; the ſin which I moſt of all loved, will moſt of all torment me, *Eccleſ.* 11. 9. Look thus upon Sin.

The third means: *Dive into thine own ſoul and heart:* There is a tough brawn over thy heart, that it feels not its Sins. Now Meditation muſt look through, and come to the heart at the quick, and cauſe the truth to dive into the deep places of the ſoul. When the timber is hard, the workman cannot thruſt in the nail with the weight of his hand, no, he muſt hammer it in. Meditation is the hammering of the heart: It's a pertinent phraſe, *Jer.* 23. 24. *Is not my word like a fire* (ſaith the Lord) *and like a hammer that breaketh the rocks in pieces?* There be two Similitudes: Firſt, of a Hammer: The Word of God is the Hammer; Meditation is the Hand that taketh this Hammer, and knocks the nail into the rocky heart, and makes it enter: Wilt thou not feel? I'le make thee feel (ſaith Meditation.) Wilt thou not take notice of thy wretched eſtate? Meditation comes with blow after blow, and makes it take notice. Secondly, of Fire: The Word is like Fire; Meditation kindles it about the heart. A man benummed with cold is ſenceleſs; the water frozen with cold, though the leaſt peble would have ſunk in it before, now a great milſtone is able to lye upon it, and not ſink; the water is able to bear it: ſo is the heart, be its ſins never ſo heavy, as the hill of *Baſan*, yet it bears it, and feels no weight, but Meditation thaws the heart, and then every ſin pincheth and oppreſſeth. *Is not my Word like Fire?* As if he ſhould ſay, think of it, and muſe of it, and meditate of it, and thou ſhalt feel it as a Fire. Meditation is the often ſmiting, of the heart with this Hammer: ſo did *Ephra-*

*im*

*im ſmite upon his thigh*, Jer. 31. 19. like a man in a miſerable Agony, he thumps his own breaſt, and in a vexation ſtrikes his hand on his thigh. Oh miſerable wretch that I am! So did *Ephraim*; Oh what an unruly Ox am I! how unwilling am I to bear the yoke of the Lord? Oh! and Oh the hardneſs of my heart! Oh that I could tell how to beat thee black and blue! Many men ſmite their hearts, but they ſmite them not often enough. When *Eliſha* bad *Joaſh* ſmite upon the ground, he ſmote thrice, and ſtayed. The man of God ſaid to him in anger; *Thou ſhouldeſt have ſmitten five or ſix times, for then thou hadſt ſmitten* Syria, *till thou hadſt conſumed them, whereas now thou ſhalt ſmite* Syria *but thrice*, 2 Kings 13.19. So men ſmite their hearts twice or thrice, or ſo, but they will not ſmite their ſins dead: It may be they break the head of their ſins, but they recover again, and grow ſtrong upon them as at firſt: thou muſt ſmite five or ſix times, yea, fifty times five times, till thou haſt quite broken the Impoſtume of thy heart. Meditate on the Mercies of God, and with them ſmite it often, and often: Meditate on the Juſtice of God, and with it ſmite it again, and again: Meditate on the Wrath of God, which is a *conſuming-fire*, and with it ſmite it ſoundly: Meditate on the Truth of the Lord, this threatning, and that threatning; this commandement, and that commandement; this promiſe, and that promiſe; and with all theſe ſmite it to powder.

The fourth means: *Anticipate and prevent thine own heart*: Meditate what thy heart will one day wiſh, if it be not humbled, and tell thy ſoul as much: thou wilt one day wiſh; Oh that I had been hum-

humbled under the reproofs of the Lord! Oh that I had been wise to have understood mine own mercy! Curſed be the day that ever I neglected the means of Grace: ſo the Lord brings in a fooliſh obſtinate Sinner, curſing and banning his own ſoul, ſobbing and howling at the laſt; *O how have I hated inſtruction, and my heart deſpiſed reproof, and have not obſerved the voice of my Teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that inſtructed me!* Prov. 5. 12, 13. I had Miniſters to Preach to me, but I would not come at them, or, if I did, I cared not for their Doctrine: I had friends that adviſed me well, but woe is me damned wretch! I heeded them not. Thus thou wilt caſt the fool into thine own teeth, and fling a thouſand curſes into thine own face, becauſe of thy madneſs. I might have learned, but I would not: I might have been humbled, but I would not: *I was almoſt in all evil in the midſt of the aſſembly of the Congregation*, ver. 14. I lived where the Saints of God were in whole aſſemblies, but I mockt them, I hated them, I miſliked them for being too preciſe. I was not aſhamed of my ſecurity, no not in thy ſight. Thus thou wilt cry out one day, if now thou wilt not yield unto meditation, which muſt make this as preſent with thee: know thou, my ſoul, the time of thy viſitation is at hand, thou wilt curſe thy ſelf hereafter, if thou doſt not now be moved by Gods mercies, thou ſhalt never ſee mercy more. Now be awaked by Gods Judgements, or elſe thou ſhalt feel them for evermore, now or for ever thou ſhalt roar for them. Then thou ſhalt curſe thy gains and thy profits that bewitched thee, thou ſhalt curſe thy pleaſures and delights that beſotted thee, curſe thine own heart, and thine own ſoul,

and thine own Conſcience that hath damned thee. Meditation may tell thee, thus it will be with thee, unleſs thou obeyeſt now. *Hear ye me now, Oh children, and depart not from the words of my mouth*, v.7. Hear the Word now, and obey it, let it not depart out of thy Meditation: Now be humbled with Grace, or then thou ſhalt be humbled with Horrour: then thou ſhalt wiſh, Oh that I had been ruled! When thou art in hell, then thou ſhalt Meditate, Oh, it was good counſel that ſuch and ſuch a Miniſter gave me; good counſel that ſuch a friend, and ſuch a brother gave me, but wretch that I was, I had not grace to follow it! I had more mind of my pleaſures, more mind of my vanities, than of Grace. Oh, if it were to do again, I would not do ſo for a thouſand worlds: but alas, it is now too late. Therefore let Meditation preſs this upon the before-hand.

3. Now follows the third thing, how to put life to Meditation. Four duties are to be done to this purpoſe.

1. 1. Let Meditation haunt the heart, let Meditation dog thee with the helliſh looks of thy ſins, and follow it with the dreadful vengeance of God, haunt it with promiſes, haunt it with threatnings, haunt it with mercies, and haunt it with judgements, and haunt it with Commandments. The heart is like the Beaver, when it perceiveth it cannot poſſibly eſcape from the Huntſman, it cuts off the member for which it is hunted, and flings it down, and ſo eſcapes (ſaith *Æſop:*) So purſue thy heart with its ſins, with the hue and cry of Gods mercies; purſue it with the hubbub of Gods judgements; let meditation haunt it, and let thy ſoul ſee it

it ſhall never be rid of the haunt; at laſt it will be content to part with its luſts. Let meditation ſay, Wilt thou forſake thine own mercies? If thou liveſt thus, and thus, if thou prayeſt thus, and thus dead-heartedly, thou kickeſt againſt thine own mercy, wilt thou ruſh upon the pricks? This mercy thou mayeſt have, if thou wouldeſt amend; that vengeance thou ſhalt have, if thou do not amend: Either cut off thy ſins, or elſe God will cut off thy ſoul. *Return, O* Shulamite, *return, return*; it's the voice of Chriſt to thee: Let meditation ſay, Return, O my ſoul, return, return, and thou mayſt be ſaved; return, or elſe thou ſhalt be condemned. Now what was the effect of this haunting meditation? *Or ere I was aware my ſoul made me like the Chariots of* Aminadab, *verſe* 12. That is, my ſoul muſing and meditating on theſe and theſe commandments, it ſo humbled my ſoul, that it made me yield; yea, and made me run faſt as the Chariots of *Aminadab*, *freely* and *willingly* to Chriſt.

Deal with thy heart as *Junius* his father dealt with him: he ſeeing his Son was Atheſtical, he laid a Bible in every room, that his ſon could look in no room, but behold a Bible haunting him, upbraiding him; *Wilt thou not read me Atheiſt? Wilt thou not read me?* And ſo at laſt he read it, and was converted from his Atheiſm: So let Meditation haunt thy heart, hold forth the Commandments, Promiſes, threatnings of the Lord, that thy heart may ſee them; let Meditation haunt thee in thy luke-warmneſs: prayeſt thou thus luke-warm? This prayer will break thy neck one day. Repenteſt thou? this luke-warm Repentance will cauſe God to ſpue thee out of his mouth: Heareſt thou?

ſpeakeſt thou? thinkeſt thou? theſe luke-warm Duties will confound thee ere long, if thou look-eſt not to it.

Let Meditations haunt thee, as they haunted *Nehemiah* with warnings; *Ten times* (ſaith the Text) they ſent to *Nehemiah, they will be upon thee, Neh.* 4. 12. Beware of the danger, the enemy will will be upon thee: ten times they warned him, never giving over till *Nehemiah* looked about him, *verſe* 13. So do thou haunt thine own heart: they will be upon thee, this curſe, this wrath, that hardneſs of heart, this ſecurity will be upon thee. Ten times, yea, a thouſand times ten times, never give over thine own ſoul, until thou haſt made it to ſubmit. Indeed there be ſome, let God ſend Meditations to haunt them, and follow them, ſaying, Repent, leave this or that ſin; why wilt thou be damn'd with this ſin? Oh forſake it, preſently they will gag the mouth of Meditation, and of Conſcience, and ſtrike them ſtark dead; as *Abnar* when *Azahel* would haunt him, and follow him, and turn neither to the right hand, nor to the left, but follow him at the heels. *Turn aſide* (ſaith *Abnar*) but he would not turn aſide from following him. Turn aſide from me (ſays *Abner* again) or I will kill thee, but he would not turn aſide, he would follow him cloſe; then he up with his ſpear and ſlew him, *2 Sam.* 2. 19, to 24. So many deal with the meditation of conſcience, when conſcience would dog them, and weary them out of their ſins, they will not: when conſcience would haunt them, they will not be haunted therewith; when conſcience would follow them up with their deſperate wilfulneſs, they gall, and wound, and murder Conſcience to be quiet.

et. But *David* haunted his heart, and would have it haunted.

The Second Duty: *Let Meditation trace thy heart:* As it ſhould haunt thee, ſo alſo let it trace thee in the ſame ſteps: So would the Church, *Let us ſearch and try our ways, and turn again unto the Lord*, Lam 3. 40. The Word (in the Original, ſays *Buxtorf*) ſignifies *track her ſteps, ſtep by ſtep*; this ſtep was in the ditch, that in the mire, that ſtep awry; track them all, that we may undergo them all again, and turn unto the Lord. Never pray but let Meditation track thy Prayer; this paſſage was right, that paſſage was amiſs: Never keep a Sabbath, but let Meditation track thy keeping of it; this duty was ſincere, that was rotten: Never do any thing, but let Meditation track it. This thought, this word, this action was warrantable, that was out of the way: track thy heart, as the Lord tracked *Eliah*, he track him in the wilderneſs, he tracked him under the Juniper Tree, he trackt him in the Cave; *What doſt thou here* Eliah? *go forth*, 1 Kings 19. *What doſt thou here* Eliah? *go, return*. He trackt him in the Mount, *Go, return, what doſt thou here* Eliah? this is not a place for thee. So let Meditation wait thee: what doſt thou here, O ſinner! what doſt thou here, Drunkard, in thy cups, or in thy prophaineſs, what doſt thou here? this is not a place for thee, unleſs thou mean to periſh. It may be thou art now ſcar'd out of theſe ſins, and art run into *civil honeſty*; let Meditation ſtill track thee. What doſt thou here, O Sinner? Civility is not a caſe fit for thee, unleſs thou wert better, thou ſhalt be torn in pieces. It may be thou art driven out of 2.

thy Civility, and art gone further to the profession of Religion, though it be without the power of it; let Meditation still wait thee. What dost thou here, O sinner? this sorry kind of profession is not a race fit for thee: unless thou be Godlier than so, thou shalt be devoured with everlasting fire.

Meditation is like the Coursing of a Hare in the snow; the Hare fearing to be taken by the dogs, here she stops, there she leaps, here she interleaps, there she goes backward & forward, upward and downward, and all to deceive the dogs, that they may not find her; but they go smelling, winding and turning, and track her step by step, till they find her; so meditation is the coursing of the Soul, the heart hath a thousand fetches, a thousand meanders, and labyrinths, a thousand cross windings, and compassings, and deceits, and all to puzle Meditation. But Meditation must track the heart, as God dealt with *Job*, he counted his steps, step by step, *Job* 14. 16. Meditation is the souls Blood-Hound, it will never leave howling, the wrath of God, till he hath taken the hearts sin for a prey; Meditation haunts it out of one sin, and it runs into another; Meditation haunts it out of that, and it runs into a third: Meditation is a good pursevant, it prosecutes the sinner, and attatches him.

Now because the heart is most cunning, and hardest to be trackt by its scent, when the heart hath taken up abundance of good duties, and attained unto sundry graces, these good duties, and common graces drown the scent of the hearts wickedness. As Huntsmen observe, that the hounds cannot well hunt in the Spring, as *Theophrastus* and

and *Pollux*, and others obſerve: the ſweet odors of the flowers and herbs (ſays *Oppian*) hinders the hounds from ſmelling the Hare: ſo it is with Meditation; it is hard for to track the heart in the Spring time of civil honeſty and formality. And therefore let Meditation make diligent ſearch, ſaith he.

The third Duty: *Hale thy heart before God*, and let Meditation bring it before his throne, and there pour out thy complaint againſt it before God, out with all thy villany there, and article againſt thy ſelf, and bring as many complaints againſt thy ſelf before heaven, as there be drops in a bucket full of water. So do the Godly: *I poured out all my complaints before him*, (Pſal. 102. in the preface) I poured out my complaints, as a man poureth out water out of a veſſel; generally men are willing to call for mercy, but they are not ſo willing to bring complaints unto God againſt themſelves: ye ſhall have them whiſper after the Miniſters, as he is begging for pardon and mercy, but they will not do ſo, whiles he is complaining of their ſins, the helliſh and devilliſh abominations of their heart. Theſe are men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith, and ſhall never have mercy, till they be as forward to complain of their ſins, as to be plaintives for mercy. 3.

When a man in meditation meets with a hard matter that he cannot ſufficiently dive into, he breaks it to another; ſo do thou to God, break all thy heart to God, tell him of thy hardneſs of heart, of the pride of thy heart, of the deſperate prophaineſs of thy heart; but take theſe Rules with thee.

1. *First*, Thy complaint must be *full of sorrow*, Psal. 55.

2. *Secondly*, It must be a *full complaint* of *all* thy sins, and of *all* thy lusts, *Lam.* 2. 18, 19. *Pour out thy heart like water before the face of the Lord.* Water runs all out of a vessel when you turn the mouth downward, never a spoonful will stay behind. The wicked will not complain of their sins *fully*: they make hypocritical professions. If it be a sin, I am sorry for it (say one) if it be naught; I cry, God mercy (saith another,) when their own consciences tell them it is a sin, yet they will not complain of it absolutely.

3. *Thirdly*, Thy complaint must be with *Agravation*: thou must agravate thy sins by all the *circumstances*, that may shew it to be odious, as *Peter* did, *When he thought thereon, he wept*, Mark 14. 72. The Original hath it, *he cast all these things one upon another*. Wretch that I was, Christ was my master, and yet I denyed him; such a good master, that he called me before any of my fellow Apostles, and yet I denyed him; I was ready to sink once, he denyed not me; I was to be damned once, he denyed not my soul, and yet I denyed him; he told me of this sin beforehand, that I might take heed of it, and yet I denyed him: I said I will not commit it, nor forsake him, and yet I denyed him: yea, this very night, no longer ago, did I say and say again, I would not deny him, and yet I denyed him; yea, I said, though all others denyed him, yet would not I; and yet worse than all others, I denyed him with a witness, before a Maid, before a Damosel; nay, more filthy beast that I am, I said I did not know the man; nay more, I swear I did not know him;

him; nay, more then all this, I did even curſe my ſelf with an oath, that I did not know him; nay, more, all this evil did I, not above five or ſix ſtrides from my Lord and Saviour: nay more, even then, when if ever I ſhould have ſtood for him, I ſhould have done it then, when all the world did forſake him. O wretch that I was, I denyed him. He caſt up all theſe circumſtances together, and meditating on them, *he went out and wept bitterly.*

*Fourthly*, Thy complaint muſt be a *ſelf-condemning complaint*: Thou muſt condemn thy ſelf, and lay thy ſelf at hell gates, and ſet the naked point of God's vengeance at thy throat. Thus and thus have I lived, damned, caſt away, as I have deſerved to be! ſo did *Ezra* in the behalf of the *Jews*, *Ezra* 9. 4.

For, 1. He *fell on his face*: He did not bow down on his knees, but like a man aſtoniſhed, he fell on his knees, ready to fall on the ground in amazement.

2. He *ſpread out his hands unto the Lord*, *verſe* 5. as if he ſhould ſay, here is my heart blood; Lord here is my breaſt; Lord, we deſerve thou ſhouldeſt ſtab us with thy wrath.

3. He *bluſhes* to look heaven in the face, *verſe* 6. ſo vexed to think on the ſins of his people, that he is even confounded to beg mercy.

4. He is (as it were) *dumb* and *ſpeechleſs* before God: *And now our God, what ſhall we ſay after all this? for we have forſaken thy Commandements*, v. 10. Shall I excuſe the matter? alas! it is inexcuſable. *What ſhall we ſay after all this?* Shall we call for thy patience? we had it, and yet were little the better. Shall we call for mercy? why! why we had it, and yet our ſtubborn hearts would not come down; I know not what to ſay for our ſelves, for we have ſinned againſt thee.

5. He

5. He declares God's truth, that he had *warned them by his Prophets* (verſe 11, 12.) but no warning can better us.

6. He *ſhews how God had puniſhed them, yet they would not be humbled*, for all that God had brought upon them *leſs evils than they deſerved*, and *wrought deliverance* for them, which they could not have expected; *What ſhall we ſay? ſhould we for all this break thy Commandements?* verſe 13, 14. What can we expect but Hell and confuſion?

7. He is *ſenſible of God's judgements and righteouſneſs: O Lord, thou art righteous*: as if he ſhould ſay, How canſt thou ſpare us for this ſin? How can it ſtand with thy Righteouſneſs? How is it that ſuch hell-hounds as we are ſhould live above ground, when thou art ſo righteous a God? It is a wonder that the earth opens not her mouth for to ſwallow us up quick: for, *O Lord thou art righteous.*

8. *He lays down his ſoul, and all the peoples ſouls at God's feet*; as if he ſhould ſay, here we be, thou mayſt damn us if thou wilt; *Behold we are all here before thee in our treſpaſſes: for we cannot ſtand before thee, becauſe of this*, verſe 15. Behold here we are; rebels we are: here are our heads, and our throats before thee; if now thou ſhouldſt take us from our knees unto hell, and from our Prayers unto damnation, we cannot ask thee why thou doſt ſo: Oh it's mercy, it's mercy indeed, that we have been ſpared. Thus Meditation muſt bring our hearts before God, and there complain againſt them before Heaven.

*Meditation ſhould deal with the heart, as the Father did with his poſſeſſed child*, who carried him to Chriſt,

Chriſt, ſaying; *Maſter, my child is poſſeſſed with a Devil, even a dumb Spirit, and I ſpake to thy Diſciples, that they ſhould caſt him out, but they could not*, Mark 9. 18. *Bring him to me* (ſaith Chriſt) ver. 19. *How long is this ago ſince this came to him? Of a child* (ſaith the Father) *and often it hath caſt him into the fire, and often into the water to deſtroy him; but if thou canſt do any thing* (as certainly thou canſt do all things) *have compaſſion on us, and help us*, verſe 22. And then Chriſt helpt him. So let Meditation *drive* thy heart to God, ſaying, Lord, here is my heart (I believe) poſſeſt with a Devil; for it is a moſt abominable ſinful heart: I brought my heart to thy Miniſters to cure it, to Sermons, to Prayer, to all other good Duties, but they could not help me; my heart is a Deviliſh heart, ſtill my heart is wicked, and rebellious ſtill; the Devil, oh! the Devil is in it ſtill! Oh, how he tempts me! he holds me, he caſts me into the fire of this luſt, and into the water of ever-flowing iniquity. Have thou compaſſion, come and help me, for my heart is miſerably vexed with Satan, when I pray, the Devil ſtuffs me with dead thoughts, and drowſie deſires, the Devil fills me with wandring imaginations, and I know not what; when I hear the word, the Devil makes me to riſe up againſt it, or forget it, or not to obey it; when the Sabbath is come, the Devil ſets me on thinking my own thoughts, and ſpeaking my own words: when a Sacrament is come, the Devil hinders me in ſelf-examination, the Devil diſappoints me of my preparation: Oh have thou compaſſion on me.

The fourth Duty: *Let meditation, when it hath held thy heart before God, there caſt thee down before him:*

*him:* When Meditation hath searched thy case, and made it appear how woful it is, then let it lay thee along before God, with, *What shall I do to be saved?* So it did with them in *Acts* 2. 27. as if they should say (saith *Chrisostom*) we have not one jot of hope to find mercy, so long as we live as we do. What shall we do? say what thou wilt, our ears are ready to hear it; command what thou wilt, our souls, what ever it be, are willing to do it: bid us suffer what ever thou pleasest, tell us what it is, and we will endure it. They did not say, (notes *Chrisostom*) *How shall we be saved?* as wicked men do: they desire to be saved, but their main care is not to see what they must do; they are told what they must do, and yet refuse to do it; but thy chief study must be, to cast thy self down before God, with the good Jaylor; *Sirs, what shall I do to be saved?* Acts 16. 30. First, *what must I do?* and then *to be saved.* First, thy care must be what to do to get out of thy sins, how to be rid of thy lusts, and then to be saved: as if he should say, I see I am at a damned pass, and therefore I was a making away my self; the fire of hell did slay my soul, but now is there hope of salvation: is there indeed? Oh tell me, I am willing to do any thing; what must I do? keep nothing back of all the will of the Lord; be it punishment to suffer, tell me of it, I am ready to bare it; be it precepts for to do, though never so irksom, O let me know it, and I will not refuse it. *What must I do to be saved?* When the heart is thus humbled upon sound Meditation, it's willing to do or suffer any thing. *Jonah* is willing to be cast into the Sea, being humbled, *Jonah* 1. 2. *Here I am, Lord deal with me as thou wilt.*

The

The first Motive: *Is it a folly not to Meditate?* Should a man walk on in a course, and not meditate whether it will tend? When he falls into mischief, what will he say? I never thought of this before, I never considered that this would be the end. Now it is the part of a fool to say, *I never thought*, as the Latin Proverb hath it; when the Steed is stolen, if he should then shut the stable door, what wouldest thou say; He should have thought of that before. The rich man in the Gospel had these meditations in his heart; he thought within himself, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? he said in his heart, *This will I do, I will pull down my barns, and build greater, and will say to my soul; Soul, soul thou hast much goods laid up for many years, eat, drink, and be merry*, Luke 12. 17. 18. 19, 20. *Thou fool* (said God) *this night shall thy soul be required of thee; then whose shall these things be, that thou hast provided?* God said thus unto him not as if God spake thus familiarly unto him (saith *Theophylact*) but it is a Parable, and God says so in his Word: *Thou fool, this night shall they require thy soul of thee.* In this night of thy blindness, in this night of thy security, shall they require it: he doth not say, I will require thy soul of thee, but *they*: he doth not say who, but *they*, the Devils in hell; God knows who shall come, thou shalt dye, and they shall fetch away thy soul to hell: *they* shall require it. A Godly man's soul is not required, but rather he requires God to take away his soul: he is willing to dye, that he may be with Christ: but a wicked man's soul is required of him, and he must dye. Doubtless the rich fool now thought with himself, I never thought that I should have dyed so soon,

*Mot.* 1.

soon. and therefore now he calls (it may be) to his *Lord, Lord*, and crys God mercy: but what will they say to him? Thou shouldest have thought on this before.

*The wise man shall inherit glory, but shame shall be the promotion of fools*, Prov. 3. 3. The wise & prudent, that truly meditate of things before-hand shall inherit glory, but fools, that hope to be promoted to glory and salvation, shame and confusion of face shall be all their promotion, and when they come thereto, besides their expectation, what will they say? We never thought it would be thus with us before, but fools as we are, we thought to be promoted to heaven: like *Haman*, when King *Ahashuerus* said unto him, *What shall be done unto the man whom the King will honour?* O thus, and thus (saith *Haman*) for he thought, I am the man whom the King intendeth to honour, *Esther 6. 6.* But when *Haman* was presently after to be hanged on a gallows, he might rightly say, I never thought of this before. So what shall be done to the man whom the Lord will honour? Thus and thus sayest thou, he shall have mercies, blessings, heaven: I, for thou thinkest I am the man that God intendeth thus to honour: but when thou art come to hell, what wilt thou say then? I never thought of this before, that so it would be.

*Mot. 2.* The second Motive is, *Thou wouldest be loath to have the brand of a Reprobate*: Not to Meditate, is that brand; *The wicked through the pride of his countenance will not seek after God, neither is God in all his thoughts*, Psal. 10. 4. He scorns to be so poring upon Bibles; to be so wracking his mind with his sins: *He hath said in his heart, God will not require it*, verse 13. God requires no such scrupulosity nor strictness.

The

The third Motive is, *Thou wouldest be loath to rob God of his honour*, and the main part of his service which is Meditation. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul*, Mat. 22. 38. How can this be true of them (saith *Chrisostom*) who become *vain in their imaginations*? Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart soul, and mind: And so do I (sayst thou:) So do thou? What! and not love God with all that is in thy heart? thy thoughts are in thy heart, thy meditations are in thy mind; if thy thoughts then and meditations be not of God, thou dost not love God with all thy heart; *David* did not only pray that *the words of his mouth* but also that *the thoughts of his heart should be ever acceptable to the Lord* Psal. 19. 14. not only that he might be full of heavenly communication in his mouth, but also of holy meditation in his heart. *Behold* (saith he) *thou requirest truth in the inward parts*, Psal. 51. 6. And meditation is one of the duties of truth in the inward parts. *Mot.* 3.

The fourth motive: *Thou wouldest be loth that all the worship thou givest to God should be abominable*: It it will be without meditation, meditation *before* it. meditation *after* it. *Mot.* 4.

First, *Thou must meditate before thou goest about a duty of God's worship*: Consider before thou hear the Word of God, meditate what thou art going about. *Hearken O daughter, and consider, incline thine ear*, Psal. 45. 10. First, *consider and meditate*, and then *incline thine ear*. This is part of those words often in Scripture; *Be ready, be ready: Be ready and come up*, saith God, Exod. 34. 2. *Be ready against the third day*, Exod. 19. *Gather your selves together*, Zeph 2. 1.

That

That is, *Prepare to meet thy God, O* Israel, Amos 4. 12.

Secondly, *Meditate after the Duty.* When men part with men, they use to give one another a farewel, and not bluntly deliver their mind one to another, and so turn their backs one upon another. *Lysias* could not write a Letter to *Felix*, and break up abruptly, but he gave him a farewel, *Acts* 23.30. Neither may a man, when a Duty is done, go away bluntly from God, but give a farewel by holy meditation. It's an unseemly kicking of a Duty, as most men do, when they are come to the end of their Prayers, *to whom, with the Father and holy Spirit, be ascribed all praise and glory*, Amen. Come is dinner ready? or what news do you hear? This is unmannerliness towards the Ordinances of God. A man that hath been at a good dinner, will sit a while after it, or walk a while, he will not presently run to his work, that the meat may digest the better: So when thou hast been at God's dainties, sit after it a while, pawsing and meditating thereof, as often as thou well mayest, let it have its working a while. What is the reason thou hast so many by-thoughts in Prayer? because thou dost not meditate before hand and after. Hence it is that thine eyes are not directed to the duty, but like a blind Archer thou shootest but by Aim; when the good Archer shoots he must have the White in his eye still, which he must level at. *My voice shalt thou hear betimes in the morning, in the morning will I direct my prayer to thee and will look up*, Psal. 5.3. How came that? you may look on his Meditations, *verse* 1. By Meditation he was wont to direct and level his Prayers to God. Wicked men know that God is before them, as blind

blind man may learn the butt is before him, but they ſee not God before them to direct their prayers unto him: they pray at rovers. Thou muſt uſe then to meditate of God, that thy prayers may be directed: if thou prayeſt not thus, thy prayers are like them in the Prophet, who drew neer to God with their lips, but their hearts were far from him, like an arrow beſide the Butt, or far from the mark, either wide, or ſhort. *They have not cryed unto me with their hearts, when they howled upon their beds*, Hoſ. 7. 14. They prayed, but they prayed not to me (ſaith the Lord:) as the white may ſay of a bungling Archer, he ſhoots not at me, when he ſhots he ſhot another way. God counts all ſuch prayers no better than *howling of Dragons and wild beaſts*; (ſo the word ſignifies, ſaith *Scindler*) God would as lief, and rather too, that a Dog, or a Wolf, or Dragon ſhould howl in his hearing, than hear ſuch a prayer as this. The only way therefore to perform duties of God's worſhip purely, is chiefly *Meditation, Meditation, Meditation.*

# THE Danger of Deferring REPENTANCE: Diſcovered in a SERMON Of Mr. *VVilliam Fenners* at *Maidſtone* in *Kent*.

Prov. 1. 28.

*Then ſhall they call upon me, but I will not anſwer, they ſhall ſeek me early, but they ſhall not find me.*

THere is a good *Engliſh* Proverb amongſt us, that, *He that neglects the occaſion, the occaſion will neglect him. Solomon* wiſely begins his Proverbs with it; for he bringeth in the Wiſdom of his Father in theſe five particulars.

1. Firſt, *Making a general Proclamation*, in the 20 verſe, *Wiſdom cryeth out, ſhe uttereth her voice in the ſtreets.* He compareth God to a Cryer, that goeth up and down the City from ſtreet to ſtreet, and from

from door to door, crying his Comodity, even the richeſt that ever was, which is a Chriſt, a Chriſt for *Redemption*, a Chriſt for *Sanctification*, a Chriſt to enlighten thoſe that walk in darkneſs and in the ſhadow of death. *Ho, every one that thirſteth*, here is a Chriſt for you.

Secondly, Here is *a merciful Reprehenſion*, in the 22 verſe, *O ye fooliſh, how long will ye love fooliſhneſs, and ye ſcorners take pleaſure in ſcorning?* fooliſh indeed, to be without Chriſt, fooliſh to be without Grace, fooliſh to chafer away our ſouls, for ſin. *How long ye ſcorners will ye take pleaſure in ſcorning?* will you ſtill perſiſt in your wickedneſs, and never have done with your ſins, will you never turn back again, but damn your ſouls for ever? *O ye fooliſh, how long will you love fooliſhneſs?* 2.

Thirdly, Here is *a gracious exhortation* in the 23 verſe. *Turn you at my correction; loe, I will pour out my mind to you: and make you to underſtand my words.* As if he ſhould ſay, Do you not ſee how you are going apace to confuſion, and that the way you take, leadeth unto deſtruction? turn ye therefore, turn ye back again, for there is a Chriſt behind you: O turn ye, for if ye go on in your ſins, you periſh for ever. 3.

Fourthly, Here is *a yearning promiſe* made unto the world, in the end of the 23 verſe, *Loe, I will pour out my ſpirit upon you, and cauſe you to underſtand my words.* As if he ſhould ſay, return back again with me, and you ſhall have better welcome than you can poſſibly have, if you go on in your ſins: the Devil will never let you gain ſo much by your living in your luſts, as you ſhall do by Repentance for them, and forſaking of them. For *behold, I will* 4.

*pour out my ſpirit upon you*, whereby you ſhall be far greater gainers, than you ſhall be by your ſins.

5. Fifthly, Here is *a grievous Threatning* againſt the world, even all thoſe that have loytred out the day of Grace. As time and tide ſtay for no man, no more doth the day of Grace: *Becauſe I have called, and you refuſed; I have exhorted, but you have not regarded:* I have denounced Judgements againſt you for your ſins, but you have hardned your hearts: now a day of woe and miſery ſhall come upon you, a time of vengeance and deſolation ſhall over-take you; there will a day come, wherein there will be weeping and crying, *Mercy (Lord) Mercy*; but I tell you beforehand what you ſhall truſt to: let this be your leſſon, now I call, and you will not hear; now I ſtretch out my hands, but you will not regard: *You ſhall ſeek me early, but ſhall not find me; and ſhall cry, but you ſhall not be heard.*

The words are a Thunder-clap againſt all thoſe that procraſtinate their Repentance, and returning home unto God, wherein note:

1. Firſt, *The parties themſelves* that do prolong this time of Grace: *they*; that is, they who when God calls on them, will not hear; when God invites him by his mercies, patience, and forbearance, by his Miniſters and ſervants, by his corrections and judgements, by all fair means and foul means; yet withſtand the means of Grace, *they* are the men, *they* ſhall call, but God will not anſwer.

2. Secondly, Here is their ſeeking after God: *They ſhall call upon me.*

3. Thirdly, Here is *their earneſt and diligent ſeeking unto God*: They ſhall not only *call*, but *ſeek* too, and not only ſeek, but ſeek as to labour to find: nay, they

they ſhall ſeek me early; even ſtrive to go about it with all haſt, and flye to repentance, *but they ſhall not find me.*

Fourthly, Here is *the unſeaſonableneſs of the time* of their ſeeking, *then*; that is a demonſtrative *then*; even a time which the Lord points at: as if he ſhould ſay, you ſhall ſee *then* theſe men will be of another mind, *then* they will be glad to be converted, then they will be glad to come out of their ſins, then they will be glad to get grace, and ſeek reconciliation with God: but alas! they ſaw not this *then*, but God foreſaw it well enough: *Then ſhall they call but I will not anſwer, they ſhall ſeek me early, but they ſhall not find me.* 4.

Laſtly, Here is the *fruſtration of their hope*, which hath two things in it. 5.

Firſt, *In regard of themſelves*, in regard of the flaw in their ſeeking, it being not aright.

Secondly, *In regard of the juſtice of God*, who rewards every man according to his works. *But I will not hear them.* Whence obſerve this point of Doctrine.

*Thoſe that will not hear God when he calleth them, God will not hear them, when they call upon him.* Doct. 1.

Thoſe that will not hear the Lord when he calleth upon the miniſtry of his word and voice of his Spirit, the Lord will not hear them, when in their miſery they call upon him.

Thus the Lord dealt with the people in *Ezekiel's* days; the Lord called them to repentance and obedience: but when they ſtood out, and neglected the oportunity of Grace, and ſeaſons of Converſion, ſee how God deals with them: Though they cry in mine ears, with a loud voice, yet I will not hear

them (saith the Lord.) When men have gone beyond the time of God's mercy, and out-rowed the tide of God's forbearance, and will not return, the Lord sets it down with himself, that his wrath shall return upon them; he will no longer forbear: they had a time wherein the Lord did pity them, and offered Grace and Mercy unto them, but they neglecting this season, and withstanding this proffer of Grace, God resolves with himself they shall never have it again. There was a time wherein God did pity them, but now he will not pity them any more; twenty five years he called unto them, and sought to bring them home; but because they stood out and refused, the Lord saith, *I will love* Ephraim *no more.*

Beloved, there is a double day, a *white day*, and a *black day*; there is a day of Salvation, *Isa.* 49.9. This is the day in which the Lord said to the prisoners, *Come forth*: and to those that lye in their sins, *Repent and believe.* Now if any man will come forth, and humble his soul before the Lord, let him come, and welcome, for it is a day of Salvation. But there is another day of Damnation, which is a dark day, a black and a dusky day, wherein the Lord will visit the sins of the world, and revenge the quarrel of his Covenant, *Hos.* 9. 7. *The day of visitation is come, yea, the day of recompence; the people shall know it: the Prophet is a fool, and the spiritual Man is mad.* Beloved, we are fools, and all the spiritual men under heaven are mad, that lay not this day to heart. For the day of the Lord is a day of visitation, and all the world shall rue it, though now men sleep in security: If once mercy be rejected, and God turn away his ear from a man, then

then Grace ſhall be no more, the door of life ſhall for ever be ſhut up againſt him: and when once this day comes, he hath loſt his own place, and deprived himſelf of eternal happineſs.

Now there are three Reaſons of this point.

The firſt is, *the Law of Retaliation*, of tendring like for like, which is the juſteſt Law that can be made with man, for to give unto every man according to his works, to make him take ſuch as he brings (as the Heathen call it) to give a man *quid* for *quo*. Now if God call upon thee, and thou wilt not hear; it is righteouſneſs with God, yea equity with God (that is more) that when thou calleſt on him, he ſhould not hear thee. For thus runs the tenor of God's word, *Prov.* 28. 9. *He that turns away his ear from hearing the Law, even his prayers ſhall be abominable.* He that turns away his ear from God's Law, God will turn away his ear from his Prayer. He that turns, it is ſpoken in the preſent-tenſe, that is, he that turns away his ear, his prayer ſhall be abominable (in the future-tenſe) that is, the Lord marks what Maſter or Servant, what Father or Mother, what Husband or Wife, what Man or Woman it is, that turns away the ear from hearing his will, and obeying of his Commandments, the Lord takes ſpecial notice of it, and ſets it down in his Calender, and records it in his Memorial, keeping a ſtrict account thereof: as if God ſhould ſay, Well, is it ſo? I now call, and will not this man or that Woman anſwer? Do I now ſtretch out my hands, and will not they take care to obey me? Well, let them alone, (ſaith God) there is a day coming, that I ſhall be a hearing of them; times of ſorrow and miſery will take hold of them, and *Reaſ.* 1.

then they in their affliction will cry unto me, but I will not hear; they will beg for mercy, but I will not regard: they will ſeek me early, but they ſhall not find me.

It was one of the Articles of high Treaſon brought in againſt Cardinal *Wolſey*, that he had the pox, and a ſtinking breath, and yet durſt come into the Kings preſence: So it will be an Article againſt thee of high treaſon before the King of heaven, if thou come into his preſence with the ſtinking breath of thy ſins, living in thy luſts, and wallowing in thy filthineſs, all thy prayers are but as many ſtinking breaths in the noſtrils of the Lord, and every duty that thou performeſt unto the Lord, ſhall be as ſo many Articles of high Treaſon againſt thee, to condemn thee, becauſe thou liveſt in rebellion, and a Traitor againſt God.

*His prayer ſhall be abominable*: He doth not ſay, I will turn away mine ear from hearing his prayer, which turns away his ear from hearing my Law, (that is the true expoſition of the words) no, but like for like is ſometimes injuſtice; for if a man ſhould ſtrike a Magiſtrate a box on the ear, it were not juſtice for him to give him another, for it is a greater ſin to ſtrike a Magiſtrate, than any other common perſon, and therefore a greater puniſhment the Law requireth: ſo God doth not ſay, he will turn away his ear from hearing his prayer, but will ſerve him in a worſe kind, he will count it abominable, yea, abominable (in the abſtract) it ſhall be loathſom, yea oathſom it ſelf in the worſt manner, *Gal.* 6. *As a Man ſoweth ſo ſhall he reap, if thou ſow ſparingly, thou ſhalt reap ſparingly*: if thou ſow a dull ear to God's Word, thou ſhalt reap a dull

dull ear from God to thy prayer; for God will reward every man according to his works.

Secondly, *Because of the time of God's Atributes,* both *Mercy* and *Justice*, have their Season in this life; and when Mercy hath acted her part, then cometh Justice upon the Stage and acteth her part; so that God will have his Atributes manifested to all the Sons of men; yea, to the face of the whole world. There is no Market nor Fair day that lasteth always: if the Country will not come in, the Tradesmen will put up their wares, and be gone: but if they come in time, they may have a Pennyworth: otherwise, if they come too late, they will find none: for the Merchant will not always dwell in Tents, but away he goeth, and will not stay for them. Beloved, God's Standing is now open, and his shop is set wide unto the sons of Men; if men will not come in, cheapen, and buy without money; whiles God offers his wares, he will put them up and be gone. For the Merchant will not lose his wares, which he should do, if he should always remain in the open Air with them; if he always continue in the fields expecting Customers, his wares would spoil and rot. So it is with God, how many sweet counsels doth he lose? how many sweet exhortations? how many blessed Sermons, and holy Sacraments, and Sabaths doth he lose? how many checks of Conscience? how many days of Grace, and motions of his spirit have been squandred away in vain? do you think that God will lose all these, and let them rot upon the stall, with staying for you? No, no, the day of Grace and mercy will have an end, and Grace and Mercy will have an end; and then the day of wrath and vengeance will step *Reas.* 2.

ſtep up. *To day if you will hear his voice, then harden not your hearts*: but they hardned their hearts, and would not be led by God's mercies to forſake their ſins, *Therefore he ſwear in his wrath, they ſhould never enter into his reſt.* If it be ſo with you, as it was with *Iſrael* in the wilderneſs, in the day of temptation, you do not know but that your ſins may now begin to pluck vengeance upon you. I tell you, if you harden your hearts this day, you do not know but this very day the Lord may clap an oath upon your heads, that you ſhall never enter into his reſt. For, one and the ſelf ſame occaſion laſts not always; as every day is not a Market day, nor every week in the year a Fair week, nor every ſeaſon in the year is a Spring or Harveſt; ſo every day of a man's life may not claim the day of Grace. Therefore if a man fore-ſlow it now, he fore-ſloweth his own happineſs, and putteth off his own peace for ever.

Excellent is that Anotation of *Gregory* on *Job* 27. 9. *Will God hear his cry when trouble cometh upon him?* Beloved, now God's patience is troubled, wilt thou not obey? Now God's ſpirit is trouble, wilt thou not relent? now God's Word is troubled wilt thou refuſe to hearken? *Will God hear his cry?* He ſpeaketh interrogatively, as if he ſhould ſay, Art thou ſo mad, ſo vain, ſo fooliſh, to promiſe thy ſelf, being an hypocrite, that God will hear thy prayer? Oh no, then Juſtice cometh to take place.

*Reaſ.* 3. Thirdly, *It is God's uſe to do ſo in other things*, even upon the contempt of temporal bleſſings, and therefore much more in matters of Grace and ſalvation. Thus God promiſed to give *Iſrael* the Land of *Canaan*, *Num.* 12. 22. but the Text ſaith, *They*

*tempted*

*tempted God ten times*: that is, (as ſome Expoſitors expound it) many times: or (as others) ten ſeveral times. But what ever the meaning of the Text be, certainly it was very many times; ſo long, till at laſt *he ſwear in his wrath they ſhould not enter into his reſt*. Beloved, though there be many a hot ſwearer, that regards not an oath; yet certainly if the Lord ſwear, we may believe him: the Word of God is as ſtrong as an oath: if he ſay upon his Word, we are bound to believe it; how much more then, when he confirms it with an oath: Therefore if the Lord ſwear, thou ſhalt not, how dareſt thou, how canſt thou hope or think ever to enter into his reſt? This was almoſt forty years before they dyed, that the Lord made this oath againſt them; and God knows how many fell ſhort, not only of the Land of *Canaan*, but alſo of the Kingdom of Heaven.

So God took *Iſmael* a hundred and ſeventeen years before he dyed: twenty years God offered him Grace and Repentance, but he would not take warning; a mocker he was, and a mocker he would be, for he mocked *Iſaac* when he was a child of ſix years old, and no means would reclaim him, before he heard the voice, *Caſt out the Bond-woman and her Son*: Out with him (ſaith God) for he ſhall never be heir with my Son: this was an hundred and ſeventeen years before *Iſmaels* death.

And ſo God took *Saul* five and thirty, or ſix and thirty years before he dyed, according to *Joſephus* Chronology (if it be true,) howſoever he took him divers years before his death: for ſo the Scripture makes it plain, 1 *Sam.* 15. 29. *The ſtrength of* Iſrael *will not lye, nor repent; for he is not a man that*

*he*

*he ſhould repent. Therefore becauſe thou haſt rejected the Word of the Lord, the Lord alſo hath rejected thee from being a King.* And do not think that thou by thy prayers, & crying God mercy, canſt ever alter him; for his counſel is immutable, and he is ſtrong in his Decree, and cannot change. Hitherto Grace and Mercy have been offered thee, which if thou hadſt imbraced, thou mighteſt have found mercy from the Lord, and the Kingdom ſhould have been eſtabliſhed and confirmed unto thee; but now too late, *for the ſtrength of* Iſrael *cannot lye.*

God took *Eſau* fifty years before his death, for ſo long he lived, after he ſought the bleſſing with tears: but he was a hunting when God was a calling: he was following his prophaneſs when God was wooing him to repentance: at laſt, when he called for repentance, and ſought it earneſtly, yea, his ſoul was careful for to get it; yet he could never obtain it, though he ſought it earneſtly with tears, fifty years before he dyed.

Now if the Lord ſo ſeverly puniſh contempt of temporal bleſſings. Oh how will he puniſh contempt of proffers of Grace & Salvation! I tell you, God will be more revenging of this ſin, than of any other ſin: He will come with Martial Law against all thoſe that contemn the Goſpel, *John* 3. 18. *He that believeth not is condemned already.* Doth Chriſt Preach Repentance and Salvation, & the Kingdom of God, and wilt thou not repent and believe? Martial Law (beloved) Martial Law ſaith, hang him up, for he is condemned already. Even like a Souldier that rebels againſt his General, and forſake his Colours, they do not caſt him into Priſon, and ſtay for the Aſſizes or Seſſions, but give him Mar-

tia

tial Law, even hang him up: So if the Lord ſound his Goſpel in thine ears, and offer thee conditions of Peace, knocking at the door of thy heart by his Spirit, and thou refuſe to open to him, thou art condemned for ever.

Take notice then, that God doth commonly give man a day, and no man or Angel doth know how long this day laſteth. To ſome it laſteth to their laſt gaſp; to ſome, to their old age, and to ſome, it is cut off in their child-hood. God gave the Angels a day, the which becauſe they neglected, they are reſerved in chains of darkneſs until the great Judgement-day. God gave *Cain* a day, *Gen.* 4. During all the time of this day, though *Cain* ſinned again and again, and went on in his ſins a great while, yet he heard nothing but a ſtill voice; *If thou do well* Cain, *ſhalt thou not be accepted? but if thou doſt ill, ſin lyeth at the door.* But when no means will prevail, but *Cain* will go on adding ſin to ſin, and murder unto all the reſt of his ſins, and ſo let go the ſeaſon of mercy, the Lord tells him from heaven, that the day of grace is paſt, the gate of mercy is ſhut againſt thee, for *thou art now accurſed from the earth.* As if the Lord ſhould ſay, before I gave thee a day of ſalvation, and offered thee mercy, but thou wouldeſt not accept of it; but now I have clapt a curſe upon thy ſoul, that thou ſhalt never claw off. So God gave *Nineveh* a day to repent, *Jonah* 3. *Yet forty days, and* Nineveh *ſhall be deſtroyed.* God gave the Fig-tree a day, even three years, before he would have it cut down. God gave the old world a day of an hundred and twenty years; during this time God ſent unto them *Noah*, a Preacher of Righteouſneſs, to call upon them to re-

repent, and ſo ſet it down alſo, that *his Spirit ſhall not always ſtrive with man, but his time ſhall be an hundred and twenty years*: yet one writes that the Lord cut off twenty of the hundred and twenty years, becauſe of their iniquities, which were ſo grievous and provoked him ſo much, that they haſted him to come before he would have done it. In all this ſpace if they had repented, they ſhould have found mercy from the Lord: but when this time was gone, and the day of Grace was out, the Deluge came in upon them, and God by his judgements overthrew the whole world.

*Object.* You may ask me *when this day or ſeaſon of Grace doth end, or ceaſe.*

*Anſwer.* I anſwer, that *neither men nor Angels can tell:* but this I ſay, *it may be this day of Grace laſteth unto thee,* now it may be God ſpeaketh home to thy ſoul, now it may be God warns thy heart, and gives thee good purpoſes and reſolutions; now it may be the Lord Jeſus paſſeth by thee in a good thought and deſire, lay hold on it, *for thy day may ceaſe this very night,* for ought thou knoweſt: *Luke* 17. 22. *The time ſhall come* (ſaith Chriſt) *when you ſhall deſire to ſee one of the days of the Son of man, and ſhall not ſee it.* Now is the day of Chriſt upon you, now is Chriſt offering and preaching himſelf to you; but if you let this day paſs, thou maiſt deſire to have one of the drops of that blood that hath been offered to thee, and yet never have it: thou maiſt deſire to feel one rap of his Spirit that hath knockt at thy heart, and yet go without it: thou maiſt intreat for one dram of that mercy that hath been offered, and thou haſt rejected, but it ſhall never be granted to thee: God may

may clap that fearful ſentence upon thee; *Now henceforth never more fruit grow on thee*, never repentance come into thy heart more. If now thou wilt not repent and be converted, the Lord may ſet it down in his Decree from this day forward, that thou maiſt fumble about thy ſins, but ſhalt never get victory over them: thou mayſt ever be mourning for thy corruptions, but never mourn aright for them: thou mayſt blunder about repentance, but never do the work.

*Ezekiel* 24. 23. *You ſhall not mourn nor weep, but you ſhall pine away for your iniquities, and mourn one towards another.* There is many a ſoul for contemning of God, and not taking up repentance while he may have it, upon whom this plague of God is come, that they are ever repenting, but never able to repent, ever poring upon their ſins, but never able to come out of them; they pray and pray againſt them, but their prayers moulder away under them: for *they ſhall pine away for their iniquities.* What is the reaſon? he ſhoweth in the 13 verſe, *Becauſe I would have purged thee, and thou waſt not purged, thou ſhalt not be purged any more.* Becauſe I gave thee *line upon line, and precept upon precept*, Motion upon Motion, Sacrament upon Sacrament, Sabbath upon Sabbath, and Ordinance upon Ordinance, becauſe I uſed all fair means, and foul means, I awaked thy Conſcience, and ſtirred up the motions of Grace in thee; but becauſe I would have cleanſed thee, and thou waſt not cleanſed, thou ſhalt never be cleanſed. A fearful ſentence it is, if mens hearts were ſoundly opened to conſider rightly of it.

And as there is a perſonal day, ſo there is a national

nal day: if the Nation turn unto God during that time, then that Nation shall find mercy; but if they neglect that day, then God will hide those things from their eyes that belong to their peace, as Christ saith of *Jerusalem*, *Luke* 19. 42. *O* Jerusalem, *if thou hadst known in this thy day, those things that did belong to thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes*: In this thy day, if thou hadst known it during that day, it had been happy for thee; but now the day of Grace is gone, the Lord hath concealed it from thee, and thou shalt never perceive it any more.

Some mens day of Grace God endeth even in their very Child-hood; therefore if there be any little ones, any children here in this Congregation, that are of age to know what belongs unto an exhortation, to them I speak, that they take heed how they rebel against the Commandment of a father, or a mother, or master, against the teaching of God's Word, for though you be Children, yet God may inflict judgements upon your heads; for not only the day of Grace, but also the day of life may be cut off from children, as 2 *Kings* 2. 24. two and forty children were torn in pieces for mocking the Lords Prophet. Some mens day of Grace is not shut up until their youth, some until their old age, some not until they are a dying; and if they refuse then, they are like, yea, sure to perish for ever; I know the day of Grace may have several returns, but at last God's Exchequer will be finally shut up.

*Object.* *May not a man be called at the eleventh or twelfth hour of the day?* The day of grace lasteth not always; and doth not the Apostle call the day of Life, the day of Grace? 2 Cor. 6. 2. It

It is true, *The Lord calleth men at the eleventh and twelfth hour*; but *yet*, look and you shall see in the twentieth of *Matthew*, that they were not called at the first hour, nor at the second, nor third hour, nor at the sixth and ninth hour, *i.* he doth not say he found the *same* men that he found at the first, and third, sixth and ninth hours, but he saw *others* standing idle: No, those that were *called* at the first hour, *came* in at the first hour; and they that were called at the third hour, came in at the third hour; and they that were called at the sixth and ninth hour, came in at the sixth and ninth hour. Well, doth God call thee in thy childhood, in thy youth, or in thy middle age, now at the first or sixth, or ninth hour, *now* come in and Labour in Gods Vineyard, *and work out your Salvation with fear and trembling*, and make use of the season of Grace, now whiles it is upon you: for if *thou* be called the *first* hour, the *sixth* is for *another*, & not for thee: if thou be called the sixth hour, the *ninth* hour is for others and not for thee: if thou be called the ninth hour, the *eleventh* hour is for others and not for thee; The Text saith; *He came and found others standing idle in the market-place, and said unto them, Why stand ye here idle: And they said unto him, No man hath hired us:* as if they should say, We never had any means of Salvation, we have had no Ministers to preach unto us: but *now* God calls upon *thee* to come in, *this is thy hour*, look unto it. If God cal thee, see thou come in, whether it be at the first or third hour, at the sixth or ninth hour, lest the Lord in his wrath clap hardness of heart upon thy soul. *Answ.*

But you will say, *that the day of life*, and the *day of grace are paralleld and likened one to another; and there-* *Object.*

*fore there is hope ſo long as a man remains in the Congregation of the living.*

*Anſwer.* I anſwer, it is true indeed, that *the day of Grace laſteth ſo long as the day of Life*: 1. *In regard of others*, for others are ſo to eſteem of it, the Miniſter is to look to his people, as to a people *to be converted* as long as they Live.

2. *In regard of a mans own ſelf, he is ſo bound to believe*, for the comandment of faith ſtandeth in force on a man ſo long as he liveth; and therefore infidelity and deſpair ceaſe not to be ſins, till a man be *actually* in Hell; when he is in hell, then they are no ſins, becauſe then he is not commanded to believe, but are part of the *puniſhment* of the damned: but whilſt a man lives it is a *ſin*, for men are now bound to lay hold upon Chriſt, and to believe, at what hour of their Life ſoever.

3. It may be ſaid to laſt all a man's Life long, *becauſe it is bounded within the compaſs of life*: for no man hath a day of Grace after this Life.

But what is the meaning of all thoſe Scriptures which ſhow how God doth *deliver up men* unto the *Spirit of giddineſs*, and unto the *Spirit of ſlumber*? and what means the *hardning of mens hearts, and ſearing of mens conſciences*? but only to ſhow that the day of grace may end unto a *particular* man, ten, twenty, thirty, nay, forty years before his death.

1. Becauſe *God may harden a man's heart*, Jer. 13. 10 And deal with them as with *Iſrael* in the Rock, ſo ſhut up their hearts, that they ſhall never melt at any Sermon, never be wrought upon by any judgment, God having cloſed them up in rocky heart, that he ſaith of them, *Can the Blackamore change his skin, or the Leopard his ſpots: then may they do good that*

*are accuſtomed to do evil.* The blackneſſe of a Blackamore is only in the out-ſide of the skin, yet all the Art under the heavens cannot blot it out: So if once hardneſs *poſſeſs* thy ſoul, all the preaching of the Miniſters, and all the means of grace in the world can never bring it unto that frame and temper as to make it melt under the hand of God; I tell thee, thou that uſeſt to come unto Sermons day after day, and refuſeſt to repent, living ſtill in thy ſins, there is no hammer nor beetle in the world more hard then thy heart: as thoſe men and women that ſit under the preaching of the Word, & hear the doctrine of Life, like rain from above, beating and knocking on their conſciences, and on their hearts to awaken them out of their ſins, and yet notwithſtanding will not repent at laſt, they prove to be *deaf Adders*, that ſtop their ears againſt the Word, charm the Charmer never ſo wiſely.

2. *God may ſear mens conſciences*; Doth thy conſcience tell thee that thou art a Lukewarmling, & wilt thou not be reformed? Doth thy conſcience tell thee that thy prayers and all thy religion is rotten and unſound, and that thy repentance is hypocritical and naught, and that for all thy vain hopes, thou art but a diſſembler, and yet remaineſt in thy ſins, and wilt thou not be bettered hereby? Take heed; for that man that runs on in ſin againſt the voice of his own conſcience, that man ſins the ſin of *Saul*, 1 *Sam.* 13.8. God bad him ſtay 7 days until *Samuel* came: *Saul* ſtays full *ſeven days* within *one hour*: at laſt his luſt began to bawl: what? ſhall I ſtay for a Prophet thus long? Stay, ſays his conſcience: Why? (ſays *Saul*) I waited for him ſo long, even ſeven days lacking but one hour. Stay (ſaith God to

his conſcience)for the Word of God bids thee ſtay ſo long:he ſtayed one day, and two days, and ſix days,and ſeven days but one hour; Stay (ſaith his *conſcience*:) no, he would not; but *I forced my ſelf*, (ſaith the Text) as if he ſhould ſay,I hardened my heart to do it,though the word of the Lord,and my own conſcience bad me ſtay and not do it,yet *I forced my ſelf* to do it: What was this mans ſin! Was it his offering of Sacrifice, and calling upon God by prayer? No,the Lord commands us to call upon him in time of diſtreſs,& being comanded, it was lawful. Was it his ſin to meddle with the Prieſts office? No:for he did but appoint the Sacrifice, the Prieſt offered it. What? was it the breaking of one hours time? No:for he had ſinned more againſt God than ſo:but this was his ſin, that *he went againſt his own conſcience*, when God ſtood in the way, when conſcience ſtood in the way;conſcience ſaid ſtay, but he would not ſtay, God bid him ſtay, but he would not ſtay. And this is the ſin of many thouſands amongſt us;mens *conſciences* tell them that they muſt not be *drunkards*, mens conſciences tell them that they muſt not be *worldlings*,they muſt not be *ſwearers*, they muſt not be *luke-warm* profeſſors, they muſt *pray better* than they do, and have *other faith* than yet they have,if ever they mean to be ſaved; wilt thou yet againſt thy conſcience force thy ſelf to go on in thy ſins from day to day, and never be reformed? take heed leſt the Lord be provoked to ſet thy ſin upon thy head, and ſhut up thy heart, and conclude thy eternal deſtruction.

*Object.* *Suppoſe I go on in my ſins,and follow my wicked courſes now; what if I ſeek him hereafter,and humble my Soul before him with faſting and prayer,and when I lye upon*

*upon my death-bed, I ſend a ticket unto my Miniſter to pray for me, will all this do me no good.*

Surely no (ſaith God, *Jer.* 15. 1.) *Though* Moſes *and* Samuel *ſtood before me, yet my affections could not be toward this people: caſt them out of my ſight.* Doſt thou lye ſick upon thy death-bed? were *Samuel*, *Job*, or *Daniel* the Miniſter of thy Pariſh, & thou ſhouldſt ſend thy ticket unto them, deſiring them to remember thee in their prayers: If *Noah* ſtood in the Pulpit, and *Job* and *Daniel* were here before the Lord to plead for thee, yet he would not hear thee. *Anſwer.*

But, *ſuppoſe I humble my ſelf by faſting and Prayer, will not God hear that?* *Object.*

No if thou neglect the day of Grace. *Jer.* 14. 12. *When they faſt, I will not hear them: and when they offer oblations, I will not accept their cry: but I will conſume them by the Sword, by Famine, and by Peſtilence.* You may ſet up your faſtings, prayers, and humiliations, you may lament and mourn, and pine away your ſelves in your ſins, but it is not *all your prayers and faſtings*, it is not all your *lamentations and mournings*, that will do you good, ſo long as the *counſel* of the Lord is rejected. *Becauſe I called, and you would not anſwer*; therefore *you ſhall call, but I will not hear*: they thought that the Lords ears would always be open, and that when they called, the Lord would have anſwered, and that the day of Grace would ever remain: but God ſaith, *I will not hear* them: they would never have ſought if they thought the Lord would not hear them, but all their ſeeking was in vain. *Anſwer.*

*You will ſay at what time ſoever a ſinner repenteth he ſhall have mercy.* *Object.*

Answ. It is true, if thou *repent from the bottom of thy heart*; but thou mayest come with many a degree of repentance, and yet never repent whilest thou livest: If thou repent from thy heart, and root out thy sins, then God will put away thy sins, but thou mayest go on in repentance and calling upon God, and performing *many* duties of Religion, and yet be hardned: look how much Religion will stand with *self-love*, so much thou mayest have after the day of grace is *gone*. Self-love may make a man fly to prayer, and run after Sermons, and go on in many holy duties, and give over many sins; look how far self-love may drive thee unto *holy* duties, so far thou mayest go; and *yet* notwithstanding remain hardned. O therefore let us not delay, nor put off the time of Grace, nor let go salvation while it may be had, *then* shall they call, but I will not answer: he doth not set down *when* this time is: it may be it is *now*, It may be not these seven years, It may be not till thy death.

Doct. 2. Doct. *It may be, this very day, even this very Sermon this very hour may be thy day that thou art now in thy sins, that if thou repent not at this very one Sermon, thou neglectest eternal life for ever*: lose the benefit of *this* Sermon at *this* time, and thou mayest lose eternal salvation, and never have it more. The Thief that robb'd this day, how doth he know but this one Robbery may bring him to the Gallows? So the man that sins this day, how doth he know but that *this* very days work may bring him to Hell. *Deut.* 32.35. *To God belongs vengeance: their feet shall slide in due time.* Therefore if a man Sin against him, he may stand to day, and to morrow, & many days: but when the *due time* comes, even the time which God hath set, then up goes his heels, he

shall

ſhall ſlide and break his neck: thy hour-glaſs runs in *Heaven*, and thou ſeeſt not when the ſand comes to the bottom, but when 'tis out, then down thou goeſt to hell for ever.

There was one reſolved to kill *Julius Cæſar* ſuch a day: the night before, a friend ſent him a Letter to acquaint him with it: but being at ſupper, and buſie, I will not look upon it now (ſaith he) to morrow is a new day. The next day when he ſhould have read his Letter, he was ſtab'd. Whence this Proverb came in *Greece*. *To morrow is a new day.* God ſends thee a Letter and a meſſage from heaven *to day*, hear his voice *to day*, repent and come out of your ſins, or for ever to hell; to day be converted and ſanctified, or for ever be hardned. Doſt thou refuſe to *hearken to day*, & putteſt it off until to morrow? It may be to morrow may be a day of God's wrath, and then thou mayeſt be hardned, ſeared, and bound over unto the great day of *God*'s vengeance; to morrow God may ſet the decree upon thy ſoul, that thou ſhalt never repent. Therefore if thou refuſe *this day*, thou refuſeſt all; for what knoweſt thou, but this very day may be *thy* day;

The reaſon is, becauſe *Gods patience is in his own breaſt*, and who can tell how long it will laſt? Haſt thou *Momus* his glaſſe-window, to look into God's ſecret counſel? haſt thou a key-hole to look into God's treaſury; canſt thou ſtand on tiptoe, to look over God's ſhoulder, to look into *God*'s *decree*, to *ſee how long his* patience will laſt? It may be God hath ſuffered thee till this day, thou art guilty of ten thouſand ſins, and yet he is patient towards thee; God hath ſtay'd thus long for thee, that haſt ſworn I know not how many oaths, God hath born thus

*Reaſon.*

long with thee that haſt told I know not how many lyes, prophaned I know not how many Sabbaths, contemned I know not how many ordinances, and ſlighted I know not how many Judgements, yet God's *patience* is in his own Breſt, it is the *long ſufferance of God*. Thou mayeſt ſay, I would fain have it to morrow, and this ſeven years, but alas, it is *his* long-ſufferance and not *thine*: & how doſt thou know when he will conclude it: it may be this day as well as to morrow, *Joel* 2. 13. *Rent your hearts, and not your garments* (ſaith the Prophet) *for the Lord he is gracious, and merciful*. This word (*for*) hath a great deal of force in it: *Firſt*, It is *a deſcription* (*for*) for he is a gracious and a merciful God: therefore rent thy heart, and let thy ſoul burſt within thee, that thou haſt ſinned againſt him: for he is a merciful God, and it may be he will pardon all thy ſins, and heal all thy rebellions committed againſt him.

Secondly. It is *an upbraiding* (*for*:) upbraiding thee for thy ſins: rent thy heart therefore, why? he is a patient God; wilt thou go on in thy ſins againſt ſuch a *patient* God; and rebel againſt ſuch a loving Father, that hath loved thee with ſo much compaſſion. Rent thy heart for he is patient.

Thirdly, It is a *comforting and incouraging* (*for*) rent thy heart for there is incouragement for thee to repent, give over thy ſins, and go to the throne of grace: for there is much mercy to welcome thee, and great patience to bid thee come home, and abundance of grace to incourage thee: therefore rent thy heart and come home unto the Lord, for he is patient and long ſuffering.

Fourthly, It is a *forewarning* (*for*:) rent your hearts, for the Lord is gracious and merciful, ſlow to

to anger, and of great kindneſs; *yet* his mercy laſteth, *yet* his patience endureth, *yet* he hath all his attributes, and *yet* he is pleaſed to manifeſt the ſame, ſtill tendring grace and mercy unto thee. O turn unto him, while theſe endure, or elſe thou ſhalt periſh for ever.

Fifthly, It is a *threatning (for:) now* he is Gracious, *now* he is merciful, but his mercy will end, his patience will end, and then if thou haſt not *rent* thy heart before, it will be too late then. Therefore as ever thou loveſt thine own ſoul, *now* rent thy heart and turn unto God.

It is God's own proclamation; *The Lord, the Lord, ſlow to anger, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and ſin.* Yea what man ſoever it be, that humbles his ſoul before him, he ſhall find grace and mercy with him; yea abundance of mercy, pardoning Iniquity, tranſgreſſion and ſin; yea any thing: Let but a ſoul come proſtrate before him, humbling his ſoul, he will pardon his ſin. But as it followeth in the words; *He will by no means clear the guilty*; if notwithſtanding all God's patience & mercy, thou go on in thy ſins, the Lord will never forgive thee: but will viſit thy ſins upon thee unto the third & fourth generations, becauſe thou haſt withſtood the day of Grace. Beloved, men run on in their ſins, as if an Angel from Heaven ſhould cry unto them and tell them, yet God will be good unto them, yet God will ſhow them mercy, and forbear them. Beloved let your conſciences anſwer, if you ever heard the Lord God ſay to any of you, thus long I will forbear you. No, God's patience is in his own breaſt, and therefore no man knows how long it will laſt.

*Reason 2.* A second reason is, *because God's patience giveth no marks or inklings of it before it ends*: commonly when God strikes a man with death, he giveth some signs and warning of it before, as sickness, & pains, and gray hairs, and many sorrows, &c. Now because thy Life is in God's hands, thou carest not for it, but venturest to go on in thy sins, hoping to have some warning, though thousands be cut off without it; but the day of Grace may come to an *end*, and yet thou never have any *inkling* or *warning* of it beforehand: commonly when God strikes a man with death, he tells him of it before hand by by aches and pains, as if the Lord should say: *Now thou shalt dye, now will I take thee out of the world.* But when the Lord taketh away the day of Grace from a man, though the spiritual man may take some notice of it, yet there is no sensible apparition of it, but after the day of Grace is set upon a man, he may be as strong and lusty as before, he may come to Church as well after as before, perform Religious duties, and do many good things as well after as before, as *Saul* went on in duties of Religion, as well after *Samuel* had pronounced the Lord's doom upon him; how many times was he offering Sacrifices unto the Lord after the Prophet told him, that he was a man *rejected*? how many good *speeches* came from him? as when *Samuel* met him, he salutes him with these words: *Blessed be thou of the Lord, I pray thee turn again with me, that I may worship the Lord.* A man would have thought that *Saul* had been a good convert. No, no, before all this his judgement and doom was set upon him; God steals upon him and says nothing; he claps his plague upon their souls, and holds his peace.

*Isaiah*

*Iſaiah* 42. 14. *I have a long time held my peace, I have been ſtill, and refrained my ſelf; now will I cry like a travelling woman, I will deſtroy and devour at once.* The Lord ſhews here how he deals with men, they go on in their ſins, but the Lord holds his peace; they provoke him every day; but the Lord refrains his anger: but now all at once his Wrath breaketh forth upon them, *Pſ.* 64. 7. *God will ſhoot an arrow at them ſuddenly*, their ſtroke ſhall be at once. The Lord ſuddenly ſhoots a ſwift arrow at thee; no ſooner it is ſhot, but it enters into thy bowels: when the Lord comes upon a man? he comes ſuddenly: when he ends the day of Grace upon him, he doth it ſuddenly. He ended the Day of Grace on the Scribes and Phariſees even in the very Sermon time, while Chriſt was preaching unto them, they were delivered up to hardneſs of heart: ſo many were delivered up to hardneſs of heart in the time of *Hoſea*'s prophecy, *Hoſ.* 4. 17. *Ephraim is joyned to Idols, let him alone* (ſaith God) as if he ſhould ſay: Sermon, let him alone; Preacher let him alone; Spirit let him alone; Chriſt let him alone. Beloved, if we ſtand out againſt God, and reject the *day* of Grace, the Lord may ſay, Word, let ſuch a man alone; and never convert him: Chriſt let ſuch a man alone, and never redeem him: Spirit, let ſuch a man alone, and never ſanctifie him: Sacrament, let ſuch a man alone, and never ſeal up any comforts unto him: a fearful ſign that men are come to this hour: do we not ſee that men come to the Word, and the Word lets them alone in their ſins: do not men come to the Sacrament, and the Sacrament leaves them ſtill in their filthineſs: men come unto good duties, but good duties let them alone, and do them

no

no good: and this is the condition of many thousands in the world. Therefore oh! think upon this you that have made a league with your sins, and an agreement with hell? here this delivered to you this day, that the day of Grace may be ended, and God may come and clap his curse upon men, and never give them any inkling of it at all.

*Reason 3.* A third reason is, because *God reckons upon every hour.* If God kept not a strict account of time, how many Sermons you have heard, how many mercies you have enjoyed, how many crosses he hath warned you by: if God kept not a true tale and account of every hours time, you might rub on many days, and months, and years; and spend much time in fulfilling of your Lusts: but God keepeth a reckoning of these things, yea of every hour, and of every minute. *Acts* 17. 30. *The times of ignorance God regarded not, but now he admonisheth all men to Repent.* Alas, when men live in their sins through blindness and ignorance, and know not God, the Lord takes no such strict notice of them, but lets them go on longer and longer, but when the Lord sends them his Word and Gospel, and affords them the means of grace, he doth the more strictly look upon them, and takes the more exact account of them; before they had the means of grace, the Lord *winked* at them, and did not so narrowly watch them: but looked over mens ignorance, (as the original hath it) but now God sends his Word and Gospel, he *admonisheth all men to repent*, he winks at never an hour, but sets down how oft thou hast an exhortation from thy Minister, how often thou hast had warning by sickness and afflictions, how often thou hast had checks from thine own conscience, how many

many admonitions thou haſt had from thy friends, how many times thou haſt had the ſound of the Goſpel to ſound in thy ears to bring thee home unto God, 2 *John* 7. 11. *This is the firſt beginning of miracles that Jeſus did*, John 4.58. *This is the ſecond miracle that Jeſus did*, ſaith the Text, God ſets down, this is the firſt, this is the ſecond time: *This is the ſecond Epiſtle I wrote to you*, ſaith *Paul*, Oh this is *the third time* I wrote unto you, 2 *Cor.* 13. that when I come I will not ſpare: ſo God ſets it down in his catalogue, this is the firſt time that I have warned this man, this is the ſecond time, this is the third time, that when I come I will not ſpare; the Lord accounts how long he hath ſought unto thee, and intreated thee by his mercies, how long he hath aſſured thee by his word, how long he hath warned thee by his judgements, how oft he hath ſmote thy heart with fears, add thy conſcience with terrors. Now if for all this thou wilt not return, juſt is it with God to caſt thee down to hell for ever.

The fourth Reaſon and laſt: it is a wonder that the day of Grace is not ended already, & that thou art not now in hell. When a thing in this kind is looked for to be done, it is a wonder that it is not done: it is a wonderful mercy of God unto this Kingdom that yet the day of grace is continued amongſt us, in regard of our long fear and expectation of the contrary. For from the higheſt to the loweſt we have highly revolted more and more, & provoked God to his very face. What contempt of *God*'s word? what neglect of *God*'s ordinances? what prophanation of God's Sabbaths? what ſcoffing and deriding of God's ſervants? how doth wickedneſs and prophanneſſe, ſtand up in the higheſt room, climb *Reaſon 4.*

climb up into the higheſt chambers: But as a whore condemned to die being with child, is reprieved for a time, until her child be brought forth: ſo this Land hath gone a whoring from God, yet ſo long as God hath ſome children to be brought forth; which are not yet come unto the birth, he lets his grace and Goſpel continue until theſe children be brought forth. Therefore now (beloved) if we ſtick at the birth and come not forth, a hundred to one but we ſhall miſcarry.

When Chriſt comes firſt to the ſoul, he witneſſeth grace and mercy to thee, if thou wilt repent & amend; yea he witneſſeth forgiveneſs of ſins, redemption and ſalvation, if thou wilt believe: but if not, he will be a *ſwift witneſs againſt thee*, Mal. 3. 5. If thou continue and goeſt on in thy ſins: *agree with thine adverſary, while thou art in the way quickly*, Mat. 5. 25. Now God is in the way with thee; Chriſt and his Spirit are in the way with thee; thou needeſt not now ſay: *who ſhall go up to Heaven and bring down the Spirit to thee*: Chriſt's Spirit is now knocking at thy heart, and now God offers his mercy to thee, now thou art in the way, now he calls unto thee to accept of his mercy, now he commands thee to take Chriſt, now hear him calling to thy heart, now he tenders grace unto thee, imbrace it: now receive Chriſt, and make up thy peace with him: remember the ſaying of the Apoſtle 2 Cor. 13 5. *Examine your ſelves whether you be in the faith; prove your ſelves. Know you not your own ſelves, how that Ieſus Chriſt is in you, except you be reprobates*; As if the Apoſtle ſhould ſay, I have been an Apoſtle to you this year and half, I have preached thus and thus long unto you, I have

wrote

wrote one Epiſtle to you to reform thoſe abuſes that were among you, and now I Write the ſecond Epiſtle, to declare the whole will and counſel of God to you. Now caſt up your reckoning, examine your ſelves, and make up your account: ſee if you have gained Chriſt. O, I have Chriſt (ſaith one) I have Chriſt, (ſaith another) I, but prove it, (ſaith the Apoſtle) and try your ſelves: know ye not that by this time Chriſt is in you, or elſe you be reprobates? as if he ſhould ſay, if yet Chriſt be not in you, and grace wrought in your hearts, if yet you lye feſtred in your ſins, and go on in your wicked ways; it is to be feared you are reprobates: either you or we are reprobates, you for not obeying, or we for not delivering the truth of God unto you: *But I truſt that ye ſhall not know that we are reprobates*; verſe 6. God forbid that this word ſhould be ever ſpoken unto any ſoul in this Congregation, but this let me ſay, is there any man here that goes on in his Luſts, and in his carnal courſe of Life, in pride, ſecurity, hardneſs of heart, and impenitency, that hath not the ſoundneſs of Grace? he hath a fearful ſign and brand of a reprobate, whoſe conſcience is ſtifled: it is a fearful ſign, if he be not a reprobate before God, yet that he is one that is not approved, but for the preſent in a wretched and miſerable condition. Now is the time of Grace wherein God hath ſpoken to your ſouls, remember that vengeance that is comming towards you if it be rejected: now the Lord's fatlings are ready; his Oxen, and Sheep are ſlain, and laid upon the board: Chriſt is ſacrificed and

and his blood is ſhed, and the grace of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is tendred to you: you that have grace, get more grace; you that have no grace, get grace and Chriſt, and take heed of neglecting any opportunity of Grace, for that may come unto thee in one hour, that will never come again.

VAIN

# VAIN THOUGHTS ARRAIGNED AT THE BAR OF God's Iuſtice:

## Set forth in a *SERMON* Preached by Mr. *Will. Fenner* at *Linton* in *Kent.*

PHIL. 3. 18, 19.

*For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you weeping, that they are the enemies of the Croſs of Chriſt, whoſe end is deſtruction, whoſe belly is their God, whoſe glory is their ſhame, and who mind earthly things.*

THE Apoſtle in the cloſure of this Chapter, ſeteth out unto us a two-fold kind of life. Firſt, the life of the godly, and that 1. By way of Exhortation, verſe 17. *Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them*

*which walk ſo as you have us for an example.* 2. By way of declaration, verſe 20. *But our converſation is in heaven, whence alſo we look for the Saviour, even the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* Then *ſecondly*, he ſets forth unto us *the life of the wicked*, which walked otherwiſe than the Diſciples and Apoſtles of Chriſt walked, in theſe words read unto you. The Apoſtle warned thoſe wicked men again and again, but they would not take warning, neither did they think themſelves ſo bad as he made them, and therefore they thought they ſhould ſpeed well enough; he preached to them in the Pulpit, and wrote unto them, though he were ſix hundred miles & more diſtant from them (and that *weeping* too) that they were *enemies to the Croſs of Chriſt, whoſe end is deſtruction, whoſe God is their belly, who mind earthly things.*

Theſe words may be conſtrued two ways; either as being meant, 1. *Of ſeveral wicked men*, as firſt of Heterodox walkers, ſuch as walk contrary to the Apoſtles: or, 2. *Of wicked perſecutors* of the Goſpel, enemies to the Croſs of Chriſt: 3. Of *Drunkards and hypocrites, whoſe God is their belly*: 4. Of *Ambitious and proud perſons, whoſe glory is their ſhame*: and 5. *Of covetous and carnal minded Men, who mind earthly things*: or as *Chryſoſtom* expounds the words (and ſo it ſeems is the meaning of them) to be meant of one ſort of men, who mind earthly *things*, they are ſuch as walk otherwiſe than the Apoſtle walked. Who are they that *mind earthly things*? they are *enemies of the Croſs of Chriſt*: Who are they that mind earthly things: Whoſe hearts and affections run more after the things of this life, than after the Croſs of Chriſt: Their God is their belly. Who are they that mind earthly things, & think onely how

to

to increaſe their living, and enlarge their eſtate; and make them ſure unto themſelves? their glory is their ſhame. Who are they that mind earthly things? that give their hearts (the flower of a man) and their affections (the flower of their ſouls) unto the world, and unto the baſe things of the world? ſtill they are they that mind earthly things, which ſet either their loving thoughts, or their raking & caring thoughts; or their fretting and vexing thoughts; or their eager, covetous, & vain *thoughts* on earthly things: they are they that walk otherwiſe than the Apoſtles of Chriſt walked; Theſe are thoſe that are *enemies to the Croſs of Chriſt, whoſe God is their belly whoſe glory is their ſhame, who mind earthly things, whoſe end is deſtruction.*

Hence then will we obſerve this point.

*That thoſe whoſe minds and hearts run habitually on earth and earthly things, there end muſt needs be Deſtruction.* Doctrine

Jeremiah 6.19 *Hear O earth* (ſaith God) *behold I will bring evil upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts, becauſe they have not hearkned unto me, but rejected my Law.* Wherein we may ſee three things, 1. That the curſe of God is the deſert of curſed, evil and vain thoughts: 2. That the plague & curſe of God is the event of evil and vain thoughts; evil thoughts do not onely deſerve God's plagues, but alſo bring them: 3. Here is notice given to all the world: *Hear, O earth*: as if he had ſaid, here is a reckoning that you little dream of: I will bring a plague upon you not only for your Idolatry, for your whoredome and fornication, but even for your vain thoughts, *Prov.* 24. 9. *The thoughts of the wicked are ſin*: the Lord doth not onely condemn

the actions and courſes of wicked men, but ſets his curſe upon their very thoughts. Sin is of an homogeneal nature, of which every part of a thing is the whole; every piece of ſtone is ſtone, for it hath the nature of the whole: even ſo it is with ſin, the leaſt part of ſin, the leaſt thought of ſin, the leaſt ſhiver of ſin, is ſin, and abominable before God.

*Reaſon* 1. The reaſons why thoſe, whoſe hearts & thoughts run habitually on earth and earthly things, muſt needs end in deſtruction, are, 1. *That mens end muſt needs end in deſtruction that never repent*: Now, ſo long as a mans thoughts run uſually and habitually on the things of the world, that man never repents, repentance not onely cleanſeth the out-ſide of man, but the in-ſide alſo, even the heart; repentance goeth as far as the Law of God goeth; where the word of God begins, there Repentance muſt needs begin: now the word of God begins and ſtrikes at the heart, as ſaith the Apoſtle, *The word of God is ſharp and powerful ſharper than any two-edged ſword, piercing to the dividing aſunder of the ſoul and ſpirit, the joynts, and marrow, and is a diſcerner of the thoughts of the heart*, *Heb.* 4. 12. Now then if the word of God ſtrike at the *thoughts* of the heart, then repentance muſt go and teach ſo far to reform and amend the things of the heart, or elſe he never repents. Let a man ſweep his houſe never ſo much, yet it is not clean ſo long as there remains one *cobweb* in it, ſo if thy heart be ſwept from drunkenneſs, whoring and ſwearing, and yet if the old cobweb of vain *thoughts* remain in any corner of thy heart, not waſhed out, nor ſwept down, thou haſt not as yet repented: *Oh* Jeruſalem (ſaith God by his Prophet) *waſh thy heart from wickedneſs, that thou mayeſt be ſaved: how long ſhall thy vain thoughts lodge*

*within*

*within thee?* Jer. 4. 14. Mark, how the Lord *inforceth* his exhortation: see how he backs his counsel (*that thou mayest be saved*) as if he had said, thou canst not be saved, unless thou wash thy heart from vain thoughts: *how long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?* He doth not say, why do vain *thoughts come into* thee? for they will come into the best and most holy heart; but how long shall they lodge within thee? If vain *thoughts* do lodge in man, and take up their nest in his heart, if a man let his *thoughts dwell* upon vain things, and he give way unto them, and use them as his market, trade and recreations, he cannot be saved; it is an *emphatical* kind of speech: as if the Lord should say, *O* Jerusalem, *thou never considerest this*, and thus he doth as it were pitty and compassionate them in their blindness and ignorance & *horrible* besotedness, that think *that thought* is free. Beloved, *when* the Lord comes to reckon *with* the world, he will not onely reckon with them for their pounds and shillings, for their hundreds and thousands of sins; for their murders, whoredomes, blasphemies, &c. but he will call them to account for their least sins, the pence and farthing sins, even their very *thoughts: agree with thine adversary quickly, while thou art in the way, lest he deliver thee up to the Jaylor, and thou be cast into prison: thou shalt not come out until thou hast paid the utmost farthing:* thou must deliver up thy farthing as well as thy pound sins, or else thou never agreest with thine adversary. When the Lord by his Prophet calls upon his people, exhorting them to repentance, he willeth and exhorteth them to *change their thoughts*, Isa. 55. 7. *Repentance* is the *change of the thoughts*, according to the English Proverb, (*I have changed my thoughts*)

*thoughts*) *Look unto thy feet when thou goest into the house of God, Eccles.* 5. 1. Thou canst never go to the house of God without thy feet: the *thoughts* and *affections* of the heart, are the feet of the soul: & thou canst never go to God without them, and therefore if thy heart and affections run *habitually* on earthly things, thou didst never repent, and so thine end is damnation.

*Reason* 2. The second reason is, *that mans end must needs be destruction that hath no Christ in the world*: now so long as thy thoughts run *habitually* on earthly things, thou hast no Christ. It is not enough for a man to hang on Christ, for many a man doth so, & yet is cut off from Christ, and perisheth for ever: thou must not onely hang upon Christ, but thou must also *get* into Christ. As in the old world, when the deluge came, and the waters increased so *greatly*, that the mountains and high hills were covered with them, and the people could not save themselves by getting unto the tops of the mountains. No question but many seeing the *Ark* swim above the water, did climb up and hang upon the sides of the Ark; thinking to save themselves, yet none of them were saved, but those that were got into the Ark: so many a man will catch hold of Christ, but his hold will be gone, and he perish for ever, unless he get into Christ. Now a man can never get into *Christ*, unless *his* heart be *purged from vain thoughts*: For Christ when he entreth into a man, cleanseth his heart from vain thoughts, 2 *Cor.* 10. 5. If Christ once come into the heart, he will set up his throne there: he will hold his Scepter of Righteousness in it: when Christ commeth, see what a work he will make in the heart, he will not suffer a proud thought

thought to remain there to upbraid him : he will not ſuffer ever a ſinful luſt to ſtand up to upbraid him; but he will *caſt down every imagination, and all high things that exalt themſelves, and he will bring every thought into ſubjection unto himſelf.* Therefore if thy thoughts run after the luſts of thy own heart, thou haſt no *Chriſt* in thee: for Chriſt (beloved) will never dwell in a foul houſe : I know there is no wheat without ſome darnel, no gold without ſome droſs, no wine without ſome lees; ſo there is no man but hath ſome ſin; no man ſo clean, but hath ſome defilements of ſin upon him: yet if a man *have* not not his cleanſing grace of Chriſt in him, cleanſing the heart from vain things, there is no Chriſt in him : for Chriſt will never dwell in a foul heart. Now beloved the very vain *thoughts* of a man defile him: as Chriſt ſaith, *Mat.* 7. 21. 22. 23. *out of the heart proceedeth evil thoughts, and they are they that defile a man.* All theſe, not onely *murderers, adulterers, and uncleanneſſes*, and all other abominable ſins, which mens conſciences ſtartle at, but *evil thoughts* defile a man : Aſſure thy ſelf that ſo long as the league of theſe evil *thoughts* is not broken, thou haſt no *Chriſt* as yet within thee. Hence is that exhortation of the Apoſtle, *Col.* 3. 12. *If you be riſen with Chriſt, then ſeek thoſe things which are above.*

Brethren you muſt remember that there be *two kinds of exhortations*, in Scripture : the one, *if a man do them, bleſſed and happy is he:* the other, *if he do them not, yet he may find mercy*; it will be a greif and a ſorrow to him, but it follows not that he ſhall miſcarry. But there are exhortations that tie to obedience, that muſt be obeyed: or elſe there is no ſalvation, as this exhortation of the Apoſtle: it is not

leſt to our choice to do, or not to do, but if a man be riſen with *Chriſt* he muſt do it: he muſt ſeek the things that are above: that man, then, that hath his *thoughts* run habitually on the world, that *man hath* no *Chriſt* in him, and therefore his end muſt needs be deſtruction.

Reaſon 3. Thirdly, *that mans end muſt needs be deſtruction that loves not God*; now ſo long as thy *thoughts* run habitually on the things of the world, thou haſt no true love of *God* in thee. For thus runs the Commandment of love, *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy ſoul, and with all thy might*, Mat. 22.37. It is as if Chriſt ſhould have ſaid, *Thou ſhalt love God with all thy heart, and with all thy heart, and with all thy heart*: for the *ſoul, mind*, and *heart* are all one, that no man might dare to keep any part of their heart from God. Every one will ſay, I love *God* with all my heart, I go to Church and ſerve *God* with all my heart, I hear the Word, and pray with all my heart: I receive the Sacraments with all my heart: Doſt thou ſo, and yet let thy thoughts run upon the world? doſt thou pray, and yet let vain thoughts lodge within thee? doſt thou hear the Word, receive the Sacraments, and yet leteſt vain thoughts diſtract thee? Doſt thou walk in thy calling, and yet letteſt vain thoughts ſteal away thy heart? and yet ſayeſt thou, I love *God* withal my heart, when thou takeſt away thy heart from God? How doſt thou think thy thoughts with thy heels, or with thy heart? Surely thou ſayeſt, with my heart: Why then if thou loveſt God with all thy heart, thou muſt give thy thoughts unto *God*: *God* that calls for thy heart, calls for all the heart: now the heart is nothing, but all a mans heart,

heart, all the affections and desires, all turnings & windings, all *thoughts* that are in the heart do but make up the heart: and therefore when God calls for thy heart, he calls for all the powers and faculties of the soul. And therefore the Prophet *David* would blesse God *with his soul and all that was within him*, Psal. 103. So thou must give thy thoughts, and all that is within thee to God, or else thou givest God nothing; therefore that mans end must needs be destruction that loves not God.

Fourthly, *that mans end must needs be destruction, that never gives over his sin*: & so *long* as *thy thoughts* run after the world, thou canst never forsake sin: thou mayest resolve and think on the contrary, yet so long as thy thoughts run habitually on the things of the world, thou dost not forsake sin: wicked and carnal men may have the eyes of their consciences opened and their hearts awakened, whereby they may see their sins, and the *hellish* evil and danger of them: whereupon they may resolve and purpose to forsake them, and then they will make a covenant with God that they will not do thus and thus; I have been touchy and cholerick, but I will be so no more; I have been a prophane swearer and blasphemer of the name of God, but I will be so no more; I have been a drunkard, & an unclean person, but Lord thou shalt see a reformation in me: Nay it may be he will tell his Minister of it, & his father and his mother, his wife, his children, & all his friends too of it: but when he comes to his cold blood again, and these cold graces which fluttered so, come to be cold in him, so that his Heart comes to it self again, then vain *thoughts* rest in his *heart*, and he returns to his old sins again, as the dog to his

hi vomit, and the ſow being waſhed, to the wallowing in the mire.

The Apoſtle excellently deſcribes a man that can never depart from his ſins: *They have eyes full of adultery, which cannot ceaſe to ſin*, 2 *Pet.* 2.14. Where the Apoſtle ſpeaks not onely of that adultery *which* is a breach of the ſeventh Commandment; but of ſuch an adultery *which* is a perfect breach of *every* Commandment, when the Heart ruuneth a whoreing after every ſin and vanity: when the eye of the ſoul is full of adultery, the Heart cannot ceaſe to ſin: when the eye cannot ſee an object of gain or profit, but the mind is preſently engaged and runs after it, when it cannot ſee an object of delight & pleaſure, but it is ſtraightway caught by it: when he cannot ſee any wrong or injury done unto him, but preſently he is inflamed with revenge, and his Heart runs after it: I ſay that if thy eye be thus ful of adultery that thou canſt not ſee the occaſions and hints of ſin, but preſently thou art inſnared, and thy ſoul is taken by it: thou art the man that canſt not ceaſe to ſin: therefore until thou turn the eye of thy ſoul, *which* is the *thoughts* and affections of thy Heart another way, thou wilt never ceaſe to ſin, For whereſoever thou lookeſt, thou wilt be inſnared, ſo long as thy *thoughts* are evil and vitious, either upon pride, covetouſneſs, or ambition, or envy, or delights, thy ſoul will look aſquint on God? and until theſe vain *thoughts* of thine be crucified, thou wilt only look upon the *ſatisfying* of *theſe vain* luſts of thine.

*Prov*, 3.6. *In all thy ways acknowledge God, and he ſhall direct thy path.* In all thy ways think on God, or elſe thou mayeſt go to many duties in Religion, but

but never be direct in thy going; thou mayeſt pray a thouſand times, but never be eſtabliſhed in thy prayer: thou mayeſt go from Lecture to Lecture, and yet never be eſtabliſhed in thy ſervice: thou mayeſt go about many things, and never be eſtabliſhed in any thing, unleſs God be in all thy thoughts; a man may go on in a courſe of Religion, but it is at hap-hazard; he is inconſtant, and unſteady, in his courſe, unleſs in his Heart he *think* upon God; and therefore his end muſt needs be deſtruction.

This then may ſerve, firſt, for humiliation to the godly; ſecondly, for matter of condemnation to the wicked.

Firſt, for humiliation, are vain thoughts thus damnable, that when they bear ſway in the heart, they make that mans end to be deſtruction? How then ought this to fill the faces of them that have the Spirit of Chriſt, with ſhame and confuſion, and to make them in a Holy manner to be confounded in themſelves, and to think of the emptineſs, naughtineſs, and vanities of their Hearts? Beloved thou canſt not go to prayers, but abundance of *vain* thoughts will be about thee, like waſps to aſſault thee; thou canſt not go to the Word, but theſe vain *thoughts* will be humming in thy ears; thou canſt not go about the works of thy calling, but vain *thoughts* will haunt thee, and creep into thy meditations, and take away the main burthen of the work all the day long. Beloved, this ſhould make a godly man aſhamed, and confounded in himſelf, in the conſideration hereof. The Prophet *David* was ſo confounded and aſhamed hereat, that had not God poured in mercy and comfort into his ſoul, he had *Uſe* 1.

had been distracted, and should have despair'd, considering the company of vain *thoughts* that lodged within him, *Psa.* 94. 19. where he shows what abundance of distracting *thoughts he had*; that if God had not sustained him with comfort after comfort, he had even been over-whelmed in despair by them.

*Augustine* saith, *a mans thoughts are not in his own power*, the Heart of man is like unto tinder, and if the Devil cast a spark into it, thou canst not hinder it from taking fire: but thou mayest hinder it from burning further. A ship may have leaks in her, and thou canst not hinder the coming in of water into her: but by thy pumping and industry thou mayest save her from drowning in the water: even so evil *thoughts*, though they be rooted out, yet they wil come in again: a mans *heart* is like to ŷ fig-tree that grew out of the stone wall, which *Epiphanius* speaketh of, the branches were lopt off, and it *grew* again, the boughs were loft off, and it grew again: they cut down the body of it, yet it grew again, *they* pluckt up the roots of it, yet it grew again: till at last the stone wall and all was fain to be pulled down: Even so it is with vain *thoughts* in the *heart*: a man may lop them off by godly sorrow: he may cut them down, and root them up by mortification, and yet they will be sprouting up, and rising up again: till the whole body of sin be pulled down, and destroyed in a man. *Gregory* speaks of them, and saith, *man may pluck them up, but yet not so, but that they will rise again.*

The consideration hereof should humble us, and make us low in our own eyes: O then think with thy self and say, O that my thoughts should be so base,

baſe, earthly and vain! what, have I not a God, a Chriſt, a Heaven to think upon? have I not excellent Commandments of my God, and thouſands of ſweet and precious promiſes in Scripture to think upon? and muſt I be thinking on every bable? of every ſtraw, not worth the thinking on. Take the Apoſtles exhortation: *whatſoever things be true, whatſoever things are honeſt, whatſoever things are juſt, whatſoever things are pure, whatſoever things are of good report: if there be any vertue, if there be any praiſe, think on theſe things*, Phil. 4. 8. What, are there ſo many vertuous things: ſo many holy and pure things: ſo many admirable and glorious things: ſo many Heavenly graces, and divine promiſes: ſo many bleſſed paſſages of Holy Writ to take up my mind: and ſhall I ſpend my thoughts and time upon ſuch vain and curſed things as will yield me no profit? this ſhould aſtoniſh the Hearts of Gods people, and greatly humble their ſouls.

The ſecond uſe may ſerve for matter of Condemnation unto the wicked: let this doctrine ſtrike terrour into the Hearts of thoſe men, that ſuffer their Hearts to be taken up with vain *thoughts*: as *Peter* ſaid unto *Symon Magus*, ſo let me ſay unto them, *Repent of this thy wickedneſſe, and pray unto God* (verſe 8.) *that if it be poſſible, the thoughts of thy heart may be forgiven thee.* The Apoſtle doth not only wiſh him to repent of his ſimony and bribery, but alſo of the leaſt vain thoughts of his Heart: pray unto God, if perhaps the very thoughts of *thy heart* may be forgiven thee: for, beloved, the very leaſt vain *thoughts* that thou thinkeſt, without repentance are impardonable: there is an impoſſibility of remiſſion of vain and idle thoughts without true repentance.

Oh

Oh what fearful news is this to the World of men that lay not this to Heart? Beloved, may we not run into the ears and hearts of all earthly *men* with this point, whose minds and *thoughts* are earthly: Is it so that he whose *thoughts* run habitually on the world, his end is destruction? Then they *that* make no conscience what their *thoughts* are, what their imaginations are, what they think of as *they* go up and down, how can such escape the vengeance of Hell? Tell me *then what thy thoughts* are, are *they* not of thy hawks and hounds, of thy cattel and grounds, of thy gardens and orchards, rather then of Christ? when *thou* walkest in the streets, whereon run *thy thoughts*, but on *thy* pleasures, and profits, and earthly delights? yea, of *every* vanity, and every delight canst thou think, rather than of God and his Commandments. Thou comest to *Church*, thou prayest, and hearest the Word of God, but do not vain *thoughts* come along *with thee?* thou goest home again? but do not vain *thoughts haunt* and dog thee?

It is the brand of a wicked man, *not to have God in all his thoughts*, Psal. 4. 10. When goods and Cattel, plough and cart, pleasures and outward contentments are in his mind and *thoughts*; when ruffs and cuffs, houses and dishes, tables and fair hangings, or any *thing* but *God* can take up *their thoughts*, they can have thoughts of every thing, but of *God* they can think none: this is *the* brand of a wicked man, *that he hath* no blood of a Christian in him.

It is a true description of a Pagan and Infidel, that hath no knowledge of Christ, *to be vain in his imaginations*, Rom. 1. 21. *When they knew God, they glorified him not as God but became vain in their imaginations*:

*ginations*: vain in their diſputes, vain in their reaſonings, vain in their *thoughts*, in their carriages and diſputations: ſo then *though thou* knoweſt God, and haſt things enough in thy mind, that convince thee that *this* God is to be worſhiped; and underſtandeſt the worſhip of God, and the commandments of Chriſt; yet if thou glorifieſt him not as God, giving thy heart and affections to him, but art vain in thy imaginations, thou diſhonoureſt God. Hear what God ſaith unto ſuch, *All the day long have I ſtretched out my hand unto a rebellious and gain-ſaying people: which walk in a way that is not good but after their own thoughts, a people that provoke me continually to my face*, Iſa. 65. 2, 3. As if God *had* ſaid, I ſent Prophet after Prophet, Miniſter after Miniſter, to inſtruct them in the knowledge of my ways, I laboured to convert them, and to bring them home unto my ſelf, and to work better thoughts in them; but ſtill they are a *people* that *walk after their own thoughts, that provoke me continually unto my face.* There is never *thought* of thine, but it is in the very face of God, both thought and imagined.

But ſome men may ſay, I think of God and of Chriſt, of faith and repentance, and of calling on God, of mending of this and that courſe; I think of death, and of my laſt account and every foot I have holy thoughts in my mind.

But beloved give me leave, I pray you, to ſpeak ſomething unto you, which it may be may ſtick by you while you live: I will propound theſe four things and diſtinctions unto you, which I will uſe.

Firſt, *What? doeſt thou think of God and of Heaven, then tell me whether thy thoughts be injected thoughts into*

*into thy Heart, or thoughts raiſed by thy heart*; for there is a great deal of difference between *thoughts injected* and *thoughts raiſed*: God caſts good *thoughts* into a godly mans heart, which being fit ſoyl, it fructifies, and brings forth fruit. Again, God caſts good thoughts into a wicked mans heart; but becauſe his heart is not ſanctified, and therefore no fit ſoyl to harbour in, they dye and vaniſh: *God* caſts in, and they caſt out again: therefore if thou haſt good thoughts, examine and try whether *they* be thoughts raiſed from the *heart* or *no*, ſee *whether* thy heart be a renewed heart, a ſanctified, an holy heart, fit to bring forth good thoughts every day. Beloved, a wicked man may have a thouſand good thoughts, and yet go to hell in the midſt of them all. *God* caſt a good thought into the King of *Aſſiria* to go againſt *Judah* and *Jeruſalem* to puniſh his people for their ſins, and to avenge himſelf on *them* for the breach of his Covenant: but what ſaith the Text: *Howbeit he thought not ſo*, Iſa. 10. No, his onely aim was how to get honour, how to inrich, to enlarge his teritories, and to bring down the Nations under him, and to make his name and fame to be ſpread, and declared through all the world. So *God* caſts many good thoughts into many a wicked mans heart to repent, and to leave his drunkenneſs, his pride, his ſwearing and whoring, to be holy and religious: howbeit he thinks not ſo, but he thinks how to eat and drink, how to be proud and haughty: how to be rich and great in the world, how to be vain and licentious, yea his *thoughts are* vile and vain all the day long.

Oh that men were wiſe, truly to underſtand this! the want whereof is the cauſe why *many thouſands*

*ſands* go to Hell and are damned for ever. I will make it plain to you: a wicked man reaſons thus with himſelf, I confeſs, and it is true, I ſin every *day* againſt *God*, and ſometimes drink a pot with my friend, though ſometimes I let fall an oath, and am overtaken with my infirmities, yet I thank *God*, he hath ſanctified my heart, for I think of *God* and of Chriſt, and I oft call upon his name, and let my thoughts run on good things: *God* and heaven are many times in my mind, and I am ſorry when I do amiſs, and the Lord hath bleſt me with a large portion of outward things. Beſides, I ſee *theſe* and *theſe* ſigns of grace in me, and therefore I think my caſe to be happy. And thus ſecurely they live, and ſo they go on, and ſo they die, and ſo go to hell and periſh for ever and ever. Here is the miſery of it, many think of *God*, and of Chriſt, of death and of their laſt account, of heaven, of hell, of faith, and repentance, of leaving ſin, of crucifying their luſts and practiſing of holineſs. Now men think that their thinking of theſe things, is a part of their diſcharge, when indeed they are additions to, and peices of their talents, which increaſe their Judgements. *God* caſts in a thought of repentance, holineſs, of the remembrance of death, & laſt account: doſtſt thou find thy heart never the better, and holier by them? Then know it is only *God*'s haunting of thy heart, & *God*'s calling upon thee, and *God*'s inviting thee unto repentance, to leave thy ſins, to come out of thy deadneſſe, and formality, to prepare for thy death and judgement, and therefore I ſay, if thy heart now think not ſo, if thy heart do not repent, believe, and grow more zealous; and thou art not drawn the

neerer to God; I say then, that the more of these good *thoughts* that thou hast had, the greater *thy* doom will be: if thou hast had ten thousands of them if they have been only Gods haunting of *thy* heart, think thou then now of grace, of God, *of thy* poor soul, *which* is not bettered by them, nor made Holy, then know they are pieces of thy talent, and it doth make thy torments in hell the greater.

2. Secondly, *thou hast good thoughts, but the question is, whether they be fleeting or abiding thoughts:* Many think of God, of grace, of heaven, of the Word of God, and when they hear a Sermon, they will *think* of God, but these thoughts, though they come *into* their minds, yet they go away presently, they are in and out at an instant, in a trice, they pass away and are gone, Beloved, there are two kinds of *vain thoughts*, 1. vain, because the *substance and matter* of them is vain, and so all *worldly thoughts* are vain: 2. or else for their *want of durance and lasting*: and so are all *thoughts* of heaven, of God, and grace, *and* of Christ, if they vanish away, they are all vain *thoughts, though* they seem otherwise. Hear what God saith, *Gen.* 6. 5. *God saw that the wickedness of man was great upon the earth, and all the imaginations of the thoughts of his heart were only evil continually*: (all the imaginations) great is the emphasis of *this* word (*all*) all the thoughts: yea all universally, are only evil continually.

But you will say unto me, doth not a wicked man think that *there* is a *God?* why, that is a *good thought*: doth not he think that this God is to be observed and worshiped? why, this is a good thought; doth he not think that sin is to be forsaken? that is a *good thought*, doth he not think of Heaven, and of Christ?

Chriſt? how then are their thoughts only evil and that continually.

I Anſ. Becauſe all the thoughts of a wicked mans heart are vain: that is, *vaniſhing thoughts*, not vain for the matter, which ſometimes may be *good* and holy, but vain becauſe they ſoon vaniſh away; thoughts that come and tarry not, that leave no impreſſion in their hearts behind them, theſe are all vain thoughts, according to that of the Apoſtle, *The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wiſe that they are vain*, 1 Cor. 3. 20. Beloved, in a godly *mans heart* when a *good thought* comes, it abides and dwells a *good* while in him, and when it goes away it leaves a *good* impreſſion behind it; it leaves a ſweet ſmell and ſavour in the heart after it is gone. It's made more holy, and ſanctified by it: when a *good thought* comes into a godly mans heart, it leaves the print of it behind: when a wicked man hath a *good thought* he toſſeth it up and down, and ſuffers it not to ſtay, but preſently puts it away: let a thought of the world come in, and he can give it entertainment for ſeven days, yea for ſeven years; yea all *his* life he ſets his heart as a wide gate open to receive them, and to entertain them: but if a thought of God, or of repentance, of holineſs and ſalvation come into his mind, he is tyred out with it, and it ſoon vaniſheth away; therefore ſo long as thy thoughts are thus vain, though for the matter good, if thou haſt never ſo many of them, yet if they abide not, but thou thinkeſt and unthinkeſt them again; if they come and give thy ſoul a jog, and ſo away; the more I ſay thou haſt of them, *though thou haſt* many millions, the greater will be thy doom at the laſt day.

3. Thirdly, *Thou thinkeſt of God, but the queſtion is, whether thy good thoughts be ſtudyed, or accidential thoughts*, a Wicked man that runs *gadding* in his thoughts here and there, over the whole world upon this and that, and I know not what, in the midſt of a lottery of thoughts he cannot chuſe but ſtumble upon ſome good: he thinks on God, he thinks on Chriſt, he thinks on Heaven; but it is by the by gone, theſe thoughts of his are not natural, but if he think of the world, of his pleaſures, of his outward delights and contentments, theſe thoughts ariſe naturally out of his Heart; they are his own. Now it may be a thought of God comes by the way. But a godly man not only thinks of God, but he ſtudies how to think of God: It is his continual endeavour to bring his mind to be fixed upon God; it is his whole care to have good thoughts to dwell habitually in him. There is an excellent phraſe uſed to ſet it forth, *Mal.* 3. 16. *They that feared the Lord ſpeak one unto another, and the Lord hearkned and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him of all them that feared the Lord, and thought upon his Name.* Where I pray you to mark, *that thinking upon God's name, and the fear of God* are joyned together: for thinking on God, comes from the fear of God: a godly man thinks upon God and fears him; he thinks that God is always with him in every place, and he trembles before him: he thinks God beholds all his thoughts and affections, and he trembles at him: he thinks as he walks up and down in his way, as he is imployed in his calling, as he is performing of any Duty of Religion, that God's eye is upon him and beholds him; and therefore he fears to offend and diſpleaſe

pleaſe him: a wicked man will ſwear and blaſpheme the name of God, and by and by it may be he will cry God mercy, and ſo he thinks of God. Th: man breaks out it may be into wrath and malice, fury and paſſion; & then it may be a thought will come into his mind to cry God mercy for it, and thus he thinks of God. The man is careleſs, earthly, dead, and luke-warm in the performance of good duties; and becauſe his conſcience tells him it is not *good*, he will ask God forgiveneſs: he will be *proud*, *vain*, and *rotten* in his ſpeeches, and then it may be a thought will come into his mind to ask God forgiveneſs, & ſo he thinks of God: he will think of the world, of his pleaſures, profits, and of his luſts and ſins, and then it may be a *good* thought will come into his mind, and then it may be he will think a little of God too. Beloved, this is carnal and devil-iſh thinking of God: thy thoughts then of God *muſt* be joyned with the fear of God.

Fourthly and laſtly, thou thinkeſt of God, but the queſtion is, whether thy thoughts of him be profitable or unprofitable thoughts: a godly man thinks of repentance, and repents upon it: he thinks of calling on God more faithfully and fervently then he did before: & he accompliſhes his *thoughts*: for he goes about it, and his heart is the better for it: Thus it was with *David* when he ſaid, *I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy teſtimonies*: Pſal. 119. 59. *I thought on my ways* (there was his *good* thoughts) *and turned my feet into thy teſtimonies* (there was the profit of his *good* thoughts.) But on the contrary thou thinkeſt on God, but God hath never the more ſervice of thee: thou thinkeſt of leaving of thy *good* fellowſhip and merry compani-

ons: but for all thy thought, thou retaineſt them ſtill: thou thinkeſt to give over all thy deadneſs and luke-warmneſs, and ſo get more zeal and fervency: yet day after day, and year after year, thy heart is as dead, vain and ſecure as before, as ever before. Examine thy ſelf and ſee, thou haſt good thoughts (thou ſaiſt) but where is the profit of them? thou thinkeſt of leaving thy wrath, and of bridling thy filthy paſſions: but art thou enabled by thy thoughts to put up an injury the better: It may be thou thinkeſt of death, but is thy life the more holy & ſanctified by it? Thou thinkeſt of Chriſt & his *blood*, but is thy heart purged by it? Oh the wretched miſery of the moſt men in the world, becauſe of the unprofitableneſs of their thoughts: they have many good thoughts, but they want the profitable uſe of them, they get no good by them.

There is an excellent deſcription of the thoughts of wicked men (though it be Apocrypha,) The heart of the fooliſh is like a Cart-wheel, and his thoughts like the rowling Axletree. As the Cart-wheel goes round all the day, and yet remains on the Axletree: ſo is it with wicked men, their *thoughts* wheel and wheel them up and down a thouſand thouſand times, their *thoughts* run upon this thing, and then upon another thing, and ſo they rowl up and down continually, yet their heart is at the ſame paſs it was ſtill; an earthly heart it was, and ſo it is ſtill, a prophane heart it was, and ſo it is ſtill: a carnal proud heart it was, and ſo it remains ſtill. But let theſe know, that the time haſtens wherein God will judge them even for their very thoughts.

2. Where are they then that ſay thoughts is free?

It

It is true indeed, it is free *from* mens knowledge, and from mens Courts, but not from Gods: they are not free from Gods all-seeing eye, and knowledge: *Thou hast tryed me and known me* (saith the Prophet) *thou understandest my thoughts afar off*, Psal. 139. Beloved, as you are in the Ale-house, or gaming-house, as you walk abroad in the fields, as you are imployed in your callings, or about any holy duty, God seeth all thy thoughts what is going in, and what is comming out: there is never a *thought* in thy heart, but God sees it: how then can *thoughts* be free? *God will weigh the thoughts of men*, Pro. 16. 2.

Beloved, what a fearful day will that be, when God shall take his Scales and weigh (no mans bodies and estates, for then it may be that rich men, and fat, and gross men will out-weigh them that are better:) but he will take mens thoughts and weigh them, he will weigh their souls: he will take mens good thoughts, & put them into one scale, & their bad, earthly, carnal, & unprofitable *thoughts* into another scale, & to try which weighs heaviest: Now if thy earthly & sinful *thoughts* weigh heaviest, then down thou go'st into eternal damnation.

Secondly; *as thoughts are not free from God's knowledge, so are they not free from God's word*: for God's word can meet with them: for it is *lively and mighty in operation, & is a discerner of the thoughts & intents of the heart*, Heb. 4. 12. Doth the word of God discern the thoughts of mens hearts? Then much more doth the God of this Word, and therefore how can thoughts be free? 2.

Thirdly and lastly, *they are not free from the condemnation of hell and damnation. I am he* (saith God) *that searcheth the hearts and reins, and I will* 3.

*give to every one of you according to his works*; or as ſome tranſlations have it, *according to your thoughts*, *Rev.* 3. 23. Now if God will ſo ſeverely puniſh thoughts, take heed, then, how thou retaineſt any evil thoughts.

I ſhould here give you ſome means in the uſe, that ſo you might rid your ſelves from vain thoughts.

*Means* 1 First, *love the word of God*, if ever thou wilt come out of them; prize the truth of God, and labour to get thy mind and thoughts to be ſet on better things; and then the thoughts of the world, and all vain things will vaniſh away. This courſe the Prophet *David* took, *Pſal.* 119.113. *I hate vain thoughts, but thy Law do I love.* How came it to paſs that he hated vain thoughts? namely, by *loving God's Law*: if he had not loved God's Law, and thoſe excellent things therein, and ſet his heart on them, he could never have hated vain thoughts: The way, then, to break off thy league with vain thoughts, is to be in *league* with *good* thoughts. Doſt thou complain of vain thoughts in prayer, in *hearing* the Word, in *receiving* the Sacraments, and art thou ſtuffed and filled with them that thou canſt not think upon God and holy *things*? thou doſt hereby bewray thine own rottenneſs and corruptions. And therefore know, that if thou loveſt the Lord and his Word, and didſt ſet thy thoughts upon him, thou wouldeſt never have them *ſo much* imployed about ſuch baſe things.

Secondly, if ever thou wouldeſt rid thy heart of vain thoughts, eſpecially when thou art in Holy action, *thou muſt go unto God by Prayer*; there is no *greater* bridle to reſtrain a man from *vain thoughts*, than

than this conſideration, that he is to *go to God.* I ſpeak not this to the men of this world: Carnal men, who can ruſh into God's preſence hand over head, without any fear or reverence, they can ſet upon any duty without any preparation: but I ſpeak it to the *godly* man, whoſe heart dreads and ſtands in awe of God: Wilt thou let thy mind rove and run all the day on worldly *things*? how then wilt thou call upon God? Doſt thou not know that this is the cauſe of thy dulneſs, thy deadneſs, and wandrings of thy heart, when thou art about any *good* duty, namely becauſe thou ſuffereſt thy heart to be *laſhing* out, and *roving* abroad on the world all day, no marvel if it keep his haunt at night, and therefore thy heart being vain, God will never hear thy prayer, *Job* 35. 13. *God will never hear vanity.* Comeſt thou to God with a vain prayer? God will never hear it. Comeſt thou with a vain ear to the hearing of the Word? God will never hear it; or with a vain Heart to the Sacrament? God will not regard it. Lay this ſeriouſly to thy heart, if ever thou wouldeſt have thy heart to the duty thou art about, buſie thy mind upon *good things*; for if thy heart be accuſtomed to vain and Worldly things all the day, it is no marvel if it return to it's haunt *again* at *night.*

Thirdly, conſider that you have not *ſo learned Chriſt*: It is the Apoſtles argument, *Epheſ* 3. Conſider then what you have learned of Chriſt; hath Chriſt taught you ſo? hath Chriſt taught *you ſuch* a love, and given you ſuch a liberty, that you ſhould love the world more than him, and imploy and beſtow all your thoughts wholy in ſeeking after vain things; Hath Chriſt taught you ſuch a faith

faith as this? Hath Christ taught you such a repentance as this, to have your thoughts more upon the world than upon Christ; to repent of sin, and yet never forsake sin? Have ye so learned Christ? Hath he not taught you such a faith as purifieth the Heart, such a sanctification as cleanseth the soul and the mind, such an obedience as bringeth every thought into subjection unto himself: therefore if now thou shouldest still retain thy vain, dead, earthly and carnal thoughts, it is not to learn Christ: Christ teacheth *thee* no such doctrine, nor giveth thee any such licentious liberty; but thou learnest of the Devil, and of thine own heart: for *all evil and vain thoughts* arise from these *three* heads.

1. First, from the *variety and abundance of the thoughts of the world*, which our Saviour calls *the cares of this world.*

2. Secondly, from *the fountain of corruption in man's heart*, the heart of man being always like a sink, naturally running with filthiness, or like a living quickset: always bearing: so is it with the heart of man, always imagining vain thoughts.

3. Thirdly, from *the damned malice of the Devil*, and his fearful suggestions and temptations both within and without: the Devil is fitly called a *tempter and tryer*; for by his suggestions and temptations he feels and trys mens hearts; and thereby knowing to what they are most *inclined*, and which way they are soonest overcome, accordingly he fits his temptations to entrap them: Now these thoughts are infinitely variable, according to the *constitutions, place, quality, passions, affections, and conditions* of men: as of the poor man in his beggary,

of

of the rich man in his abundance, of the Minister in his calling, of the Magistrate in his, and so of all other men. Now the whole world is not able to fill the heart; how then shall we number the thoughts of it? but for the better understanding, we will rank them into these four heads, to show how *thoughts become vain.*

1. *Materially*, mens thoughts are vain, when the matter of them is vain. 1.

2. *Formally*, when though for the matter they are never so good, yet the *manner* of thinking *them* is evil. 2.

3. *Essentially*, when the man that thinks them is vain. 3.

4. When it is a thought that might become the best Saint upon the earth, or a glorified Angel in Heaven; yet *the drift of the soul being carnal and vain*, the soul thereby becomes vain also. 4.

First, then, *material* vain thoughts, are all *thoughts of the world*, of the works of thy calling, of thy recreations, eating, drinking, sleeping, thoughts of thy wife and children, and the like: they are vain thoughts, not sinful necessarily, yet they may come to be sinful five manner of ways. 1.

First, *when we think of them primarily*, that is, in the first place, when we think of them before we think of God. Tell me then, what are thy first thoughts in the morning? Hereby a man may know his thoughts whether they be good or evil. Consider, I say, what it is that first presents it self unto thy thoughts: certainly, that which the heart is most haunted withal, and most taken up with, is most natural unto it: If the heart be carnal and earthly, it will have carnal and earthly thoughts: if *Manner* 1.

if it be a godly and gracious heart, it will labour to make God the first in his thoughts. I know the godly man fails in many things, and many unruly thoughts in him may *rebel*; but it is the very grief of his soul, and he will never rest nor be at quiet, till he hath got Balm from *Gilead*, strength from Christ for the *subduing* and crucifying of them, even of those vain and sinful thoughts that stick closest unto their hearts, and are most prone unto them naturally: so that it is the practice of a godly man first in the morning, *to lift up his heart with his hand unto God*; and when he is up, his thoughts are wholly upon God. See this in *David*, who considering that the Lord was present every where, made this use of it: *When I awake I am present with thee*, *Psal.* 139. 18. His heart was lifted up to God, he did endeavour to shake hands with God (as it were) in his holy meditations, worshiping and adoring God with his first thoughts: he would be sure to give God the flower and Maiden-head of his first service and thoughts: as soon as ever he was awake, his heart was in heaven. This shews that the thoughts of men that live in their sins, are damnable thoughts. Thou that art a drunkard, a swearer, a prophain person, a carnal worldling, that never hast repented, I tell thee, that the very thinking of thy meat and drink is damnable, the very thoughts of thy recreations and of thy sleep, are damnable thoughts: to think of the works of thy calling, yea, of seting thy foot upon the ground, or of any thing that God hath commanded thee to do, are all damnable thoughts: Why? because thou giveſt not God thy first thoughts: wilt thou think of thy belly and back, before thou

thinkeſt

thinkeſt of God, and how to be converted unto him? Wilt thou think of thy Markets and Fairs before thou thinkeſt of thy reconciliation with God? The firſt thing that every ſoul is bound to do, is to get in with God: *Firſt ſeek the Kingdom of God*, (ſaith our Saviour) *and the righteouſneſs thereof*, *Mat.* 6. 35. Where our Saviour doth not forbid our taking of thought for the things of this life, but that they ſhould not be ſought after in the firſt place; ſo that our firſt thoughts and endeavours ſhould be after the Kingdom of heaven. Therefore all thoughts whatſoever, which are conceived before a man be converted, and ſo thinks of God, are all damnable thoughts.

*Manner* 2. Secondly, all worldly thoughts are ſinful, when we think of them too uſually (as *Chryſoſtom* ſpeaks) becauſe we think of the univerſallity of them. Beloved, it is lawful to think of the world, and to think of our trade and imployments, to think of our corn, of our cattel, fields, barns, wives, children: for if God have commanded or commended theſe things unto us, then ſurely he gives us leave to think on them, that ſo we may accompliſh our buſineſs the better: but let us take heed they be not too uſual with us: for we have ſouls as well as bodies, and there is a heavenly as well as an earthly buſineſs to think upon: thou art not to live here always, therefore take heed that thy thoughts be not too uſual and common upon the things of the world, let not earth and earthly things have too much of thy thoughts. As the Prophet *David* ſeeing the thoughts of wicked men wholly to run after the things of the world, he tells them, *all their thoughts periſh*: and ſo I tell you, if that your thoughts

thoughts on the World run together with heap and croud, and then you bundle them in bundles (as it were) they all prove damnable, and ſhall periſh.

*Manner 3.* Thirdly, worldly thoughts are ſinful and damnable, *if thou thinkeſt of them too ſavourly*: a carnal-minded man thinks ſavourily of the things of the world, the *thoughts* of earthly *things* are ſavoury unto him: a wicked man will think of God and of the world: but which is the *ſavoureſt* thought to him? He will think of Chriſt, of heaven, and of the word of God, and of ſuch a Sermon he heard, but alas, he finds no ſavour, taſte, nor relliſh in them; he finds no ſweetneſs, joy, or delight in them: but when he thinks of the world, of his gold and ſilver, of his lands & livings; Oh theſe are merry *thoughts* unto him, theſe are ſweet unto him, and pleaſant to him, and his heart is now at home in his own neſt; he can think of theſe ſeven days, nay, ſeven months, nay, ſeven years together, and yet never be weary, but his *thought's* as full and freſh as at the firſt: But bring him to a Sermon, or to a prayer, and he is jaded preſently, his heart is empty, and his thoughts are at an end: For (ſaith the Apoſtle) *they that are after the fleſh ſavour the things of the fleſh*, *Rom.* 8. 5. It is a true note of an earthly, carnal, fleſhly heart, to be thinking on earthly and vain things ſavourily. Thou maiſt *think* on the world, but it muſt be onely with a caſt of thy *thoughts*, as one that looks upon a thing with a ſquint eye: but when thou art to think on God, or on the things of God; then thou muſt *gather all thy thoughts and affections*, thou muſt lay all the powers of thy ſoul together, and thou muſt imploy them onely to this work. Fourthly,

Fourthly, worldly thoughts become ſinful, *when we think of them without counſel*; then (ſaith *Solomon*) *they come to nought*, when a man conſiders not aforehand what thoughts are neceſſary and needful and ſo reſtrains and keeps off all impertinent *thoughts*: then his thoughts will prove diſtruſtful, carking thoughts, caring for the morrow, contrary to the rule of Chriſt, *Mat.* 6. 33. *Take no care for to morrow, let to morrow care for it ſelf.* He doth not forbid here Chriſtian provident thoughts: for godly honeſt, and ſober thoughts, are fiting and neceſſary, but he ſeems hereby to cut off all diſtruſting carking thoughts. *Manner* 4.

Fifthly, Worldly thoughts come to be ſinful, *when they are thought needleſsly*: And here I will ſhew how far a man may think of the world, namely, ſo far as his neceſſary buſineſs requires. Suppoſe a mans buſineſs be upon Merchandiſe, it is lawful to think of it, and of his ſhop and wares; but if thou wouldeſt know how far; why, ſo far as it is for thy buſineſs: But if thou haſt ſo many of them, *that thy heart* is taken up with them, and thy mind ſtill on them, then they are ſinful thoughts. There is many a man that in following of his buſineſs beſtows more thoughts upon it than his buſineſs requires, he hath ten thouſands of ſuperfluous thoughts: but let ſuch remember the exhortation of the Wiſe man, *eſtabliſh thy thoughts by counſel*: counſel will tell a man when he hath thought enough, and what thoughts are fit for his imployment. Not that any man can carry himſelf always in that Golden mediocrity or mean: but a Chriſtians care muſt be daily more and more to pare off all ſuperfluous thoughts of earthly things. *Manner* 5.

Now

2. Now we come to the second thing: 2. *Thoughts are vain formally, when though the matter of them be never so good, yet the manner of thinking them is evil.* It is possible that a wicked man go to Hell, though he performs the same things for the *matter* of them, that a *godly* man doth: a *godly* man *comes to Church*, so doth a wicked man; a *godly* man *prays in his family*, so doth a wicked man; a *godly* man *reads the Scriptures*, so doth a wicked man; a *godly* man *repeats Sermons*, and confers of *good things*, so doth a wicked man. There is no *work* that *comes* to the *outward act*, that a *godly* man doth, but a wicked man may do the same: here only is the difference, in the *manner* of working. I will set it out to you by a place of Scripture; *In a great house* (saith the Apostle) *there are not onely vessels of gold, and of silver, but also of wood and of stone, some to honour, and some to dishonour*, 2 Tim. 2. 20. Mark how the Apostle here sets out the reprobate and the elect, comparing them to vessels of honor, and dishonour: the vessels of dishonour are of the same matter that the vessels of honour are of: suppose it be pewter or silver, cast it into an honorable form, & it will be a vessel of honour; but cast it into a dishonourable form, and it will be a vessel of dishonour, for base and mean service; even so it is between a true Christian, and a meer formal professor, the *matter* of their service is one and the same: suppose it be hearing the Word, or receiving of the Sacraments, prayer, or the like, the substance and action is the same: but take the same prayer, and let a godly man cast it in his form, and it is holy and prevails with God: let a wicked man take the same prayer, and cast it into his

his dishonourable form, and it becomes sinful, not regarded, and abominable in Gods eyes. For hearing of the Word of God, the *godly* man hears, and the wicked man hears; the matter in both is the same: the *godly* man he casteth the Word into a *godly* mould, he hears the Word, and he trembles at it; he hears the Word and believes it, he hears the Word, and his heart bows to it, and resolves to practice it: a wicked man he hears the Word too, but he casteth it into a dishonourable mould, he hears it with deadness and dulness, without trembling, without faith and obedience. So a *godly* man may think *thoughts* of God, and so may a Wicked man think *thoughts* of God, the matter of both is *good*; yet the *thoughts* of the wicked are vain, though he thinks of God, yet, because he casteth it into his dishonourable frame, he fears not God, his heart trembles not at God, but his heart is as full of dead earthly affections as before; he thinks of hearing the word, but it is after his own fashion, he thinks of praying, but he prays with his own spirit, and not with the spirit of Adoption.

The Psalmist tells us, that the whoremaster, the drunkard, and the thief, thinks of God, but it is after his own fashion, *Psal.* 50. 21. *These things hast thou done* (saith God) *and I held my tongue, and thou thoughtest that I was even such a one as thy self*: A wicked man goes on in his sins, and thinks that they are not so devilish and abominable, as some say they are: and he thinks that God thinks so too; he is earthly, carnal, luke-warm, and dead-hearted, and if he repent at the last, he thinks all will be well, and he thinks God is of the same mind too: he goes on in his drunkenness, swearing, pride, and

hypocriſie; and he thinks if he do but remember to ask God mercy, and to cry, Lord receive my ſoul, when he is going out of the world, he thinks he ſhall not go to Hell, but be carried to the joys of Heaven, and he thinks God is of his mind, that God thinks ſo too: But mark what the Lord ſaith: *I will reprove thee, and ſet thy ſins in order before thee. Oh conſider this you that forget God, leſt he tear you in pieces and there be none to deliver you.*

3. Thirdly, mens *thoughts* are vain, when *the heart* that thinks upon them is earthly and vain; wherefore if all the wicked men in the world ſhould lay their heads together to think a good thought, yet they cannot: for their hearts are vain hearts, ſinful hearts, they may think of excellent propoſitions concerning God, his worſhip, his word, and ſervice; but ſo long as the heart that thinks upon them is carnal and vain, they cannot ſpeak that which is good, as ſaith our Saviour: *Mat.* 12. 34. *How can you ſpeak good things?* Why, may ſome men ſay? *may not a wicked man read a Chapter in a Bible? are the words ſo hard to be underſtood, and pronounced? cannot a wicked man take a Sermon and read it, and hear a Sermon and repeat it? What? are letters and ſillables ſo hard to be pronounced?*

*Object.*

*Anſw.* I anſwer, (beloved) that is not the meaning of our Saviour (*How can ye that are evil ſpeak good things*) no, no, a wicked man may read Gods word, and propound good queſtions, as well as a true Chriſtian, but he cannot ſpeak good words, that is, he cannot ſpeak them from a good heart: & therefore his heart being carnal and vain, good words in his mouth are as a jewel in a ſwines ſnout: It is a word indeed, but not a ſpeech, when he reads or pro-

pronounceth God's Word. *Ariſtotle* ſaith, that ſpeech is nothing but the expreſſion of that, that is within the heart. Now then, if the word and truth of God be not ingraffed in thy heart, if thy heart be not heavenly when thou ſpeakeſt of heavenly things, thou doſt pronounce them, but not ſpeak them. But when thou ſpeakeſt of earthly things, then thou ſpeakeſt to the purpoſe; becauſe thy heart is ſet upon them, and thy mind and thy tongue go together, there is no jar nor diſcord betwixt them: but if thy heart be not pure, though thou ſpeakeſt good things, or holy things, yet in Chriſt's ſence thou ſpeakeſt them not: For (ſay I) how can a vain, evil, corrupt heart think good thoughts? *An evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit*, (ſaith our Saviour) he doth not ſay, that an evil tree cannot be made good, for it may be grafted into another ſtock: divers ways there are to make it good: but ſo long as it is a corrupt tree, it cannot bring forth good fruit; *Do men gather Grapes of Thorns, or Figs of Thiſtles?* Doſt thou go to a drunkard, and thinkeſt there to find any religion in him? or to a whoremaſter to find grace in him? Doſt thou go to a ſwearer or a prophane perſon, and thinkeſt thou to find any fear of God in them? Indeed ſometimes there may be ſome mortal good found in them, but they are as a pearl in a Dunghill out of it's place.

Fourthly, *all mens thoughts come to be vain when the drift and end of the heart and ſoul in thinking of them is vain.*

But thou wilt ſay unto me, *the end of my good thoughts is Gods glory. What? is it not to Gods glory that we go to the word and Sacrament, that we pray and give alms?*

I anſwer, the end of every *good* work in *it ſelf* is Gods *glory*; but is it the end of the worker, ſpeaker, or thinker, I make no queſtion but the end of a *good* action in it ſelf is the *glory* of God: ſo, the end of prayer is the *glory* of God, the end of all preaching and Sermons is the *glory* of God, the end of *giving* of alms, and of all *good thoughts*, is the *glory* of God, but the end of the man that prays and preaches, what is that? the end of the hearer and giver of alms, what is that? the end of him that ſpeaks well, what is that? Beloved, moſt men have falſe and corrupt ends, *which* we will branch out into theſe three heads.

Firſt, *men will be thinking and ploding from morning till night of their worldly buſineſſes: Now becauſe they know they muſt think on God, to make God amends, perhaps they will think on him at night, when they have diſhonoured him all the day.* So men will ſwear and ſwagger, drink and be drunk, and when they have done, ſay, Lord have mercy upon me, and ſo they think to make God amends. What (beloved) will ye ſwear, ſwagger, drink, be drunk, and lye, be ſecure and worldly, and then ask God forgiveneſſe to make him amends? This is to break *Priſcians* head, that you may give him a plaiſter. Will you treſpaſs your neighbour, that you may ask him forgiveneſs? This is a damned and devilliſh religion: yet this is the religion of many men in the world, you ſhall have them keep days and weeks and years in the obſervation of the times of Gods worſhip: they will keep the Sabbath in comming to Church, they will hear Sermons, pray & think of God: but all this is to make God amends for the wrong that they have done him: they know they

they have offended God, and therefore they will do ſomething to make him amends: like thoſe wicked men in *Jeremiahs* time, who did *ſteal, murder, commit adultery, ſwear falſly, and burn incenſe unto Baal, and walk after the Gods they knew not*, and then come and ſtand before God in his houſe, which is called by his name, and ſaid, *We are delivered though we have done all theſe abominations.* As if God ſhould ſay unto wicked men, What, will ye ſwear, ſteal, lye, and be earthly, giving up your ſelves unto all manner of lewdneſs in the breach and contempt of my commandements, and then think by making a prayer unto me, and by lifting up your eyes unto me, and by giving your ears to hear my word, thereby to make me recompence? No, no, *I have ſhewed thee, O man, what is good*, Micah 8.

Secondly, *the end of mens thoughts is commonly to collogue with God.* Let a man be under the croſs, in calamity, pain, and miſery, *then* God ſhall hear of him often, then he will think of God, and of his ſins: Nay, the beaſtlieſt wretch in a whole Pariſh, upon his ſick bed, then, Oh how will he call upon God, then ſend for the Miniſter, let him pray for me, read a chapter of ſome good book; then God ſhall have ſervice upon ſervice, then he ſhall have the firſt, ſecond, and third courſe. But all this is but to be raiſed up again; and then when he hath received a little ſtrength, he falls off again: like the Jews, who when *God ſlew them, they ſought him: and they returned and enquired early after God; nevertheleſs they did but diſſemble with him, with their Mouths, and flatter him with their double hearts*, Pſa. 37. 34. There is many a man that ſeeks to God,

2.

yea, that seeks to him with tears, and performs many a good duty, and yet he doth but flatter with God, he doth it but to curry favour with him: he is afraid of sickness, crosses, plagues, and death, and curses upon him, if he should not do so, and therefore to prevent this, he will dissemble some service to God.

3. Thirdly, *to smother and choak their own consciences*; their hearts think and tell them, they must think of God, their consciences tell them, that they must have some holiness, some religion; that they must keep the Sabbath in some sort, that they must pray and go to Church: and hence it is, that the drunkard, swearer, whoremaster, will sometimes have thoughts of God, and will be performing some outward acts of Religion, Why? his conscience otherwise would not let him be at rest, but it is as the Devils ban-dog to drive him to it.

Thus when the Prophet commanded the people to worship the Lord, to reverence his name, to hallow his Sabbaths; their consciences told them that they must do so, or else all the threatnings of wrath and vengeance denounced by the Prophets would come upon them, hence it is that the Lord by his prophet exhorts, saying, *Arise ye and depart for this is not your rest*: your mind hath another haunt, you have this and that black lust, this is not your rest. Doth thy heart rest on God and good things? If thy heart be good and holy, so that it takes up its rest in God, and in Christ, then it is well, but if thou only turnest aside to good duties, and fallest, as it were by chance upon holy things; away, away (saith God) this is not your rest. *Aristotle* saith, *that the being of a thing consisteth in the end*

*end of a thing*. Therefore if the end of thy thoughts and courſes be earthly & vain, then certainly thy religion is earthly & vain. Thou goeſt up & down what is it that thou lookeſt after? Is it that thou mayeſt have grace, or that thou mayeſt follow thy calling, and get thy living? is it this that thou wouldeſt have, for which thou keepeſt ſuch a digging and ſcraping, and ſuch a laying up? Then thy end is carnal and vain, and thy drift and end declareth the truth of thy ſoul, that it is carnal and vain.

# THE Iudgement of the World BY SAINTS AT The Laſt Day.

DISCOVERED IN A SERMON: By Mr. *W. FENNER*, upon this enſuing Text.

1 Cor. 6. part of the 2d. Verſe.

*Know ye not that the Saints ſhall judge the World?*

THE *Corinthians* thought *Paul* had Converted many poor mean men amongſt them, Chapter 1. 26, 27. *God hath choſen the fooliſh things of the world to confound the wiſe, and the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty*: yet, the nobles, the Lawyers, Counſellors, & chief men in the city, the

the Apoſtle had not converted one of them, or at the leaſt very few. Brethren, you ſee your calling, who they are that be converted to the obedience of the Goſpel of Chriſt from the evil of their ways: not many wiſe men after the fleſh, not many rich, not many noble, ſome *few* there be, here and there one; but for the moſt part they are a company of poor beggerly Chriſtians: now (it ſeems) theſe poor Chriſtians have controverſies one with another, went to Law among themſelves, and that before unbelievers. The Apoſtle condemns this their *going to Law*, and would have them ceaſe their ſuits and quarrels, one againſt another before the unjuſt and unbelievers, and that by four Arguments.

Firſt, *by the ſhamefulneſſe of it*, verſe 5. *I ſpeak it to your ſhame*; as if he ſhould ſay, Are you ſuch fools, that you canot take up theſe maters among your ſelves? that you cannot make references of your wrongs to mediate one to another; but that you muſt go to Law before unbelievers? 1.

Secondly, *from the ſcandalouſneſſe of it.* It is a thing ſo ſcandalous and offenſive to thoſe that are without, that I wonder any of you dare be ſo bold as to go to Law one with another. What will the world think? What? are theſe the men that profeſſe the Golpel? Are theſe they that have the wiſdome of God in them, and that are led by the Spirit of God? And have they no more underſtanding in them, then when they have any matter of controverſie, they cannot end it among themſelves, but muſt go to Law before *the unjuſt and unbelievers*? (as they term them.) 2.

Thirdly, *from the unſeemlineſſe of it*, in the ſecond verſe. 3.

verſe. *Do you not know that the Saints ſhall judge the earth?* What? hath God made you Judges of the world, and do you go to be judged by the world? Or, as *Ambroſe* ſpeaks, hath God appointed you to be Judges of the men in the world, and are you not fit to be Judges of the things of the World?

4. Fourthly, *from the ſtrangeneſſe of it*; *Dare any of you?* He ſpeaks interrogatively (verſe 1.) It is a ſtrange thing that you ſhould come to that impudency againſt the Goſpel of Chriſt; one would think that you would tremble and quake at ſuch a thing as this is. What, is there never a wiſe Chriſtian among you? never an underſtanding profeſſor that is able to take up a controverſie, or decide and judge between his brethren? what a ſtrange thing is this? Then he backs it with four Arguments.

1. 1. *Becauſe they were Brethren*, verſe 6. *Brother go to Law with brother.*

2. 2. *Becauſe it was about the things of this life*: what? hath God made you Judges of heavenly things, of *Angels*, and are you unfit to judge of *the things of this life?*

3. 3. *It was about ſmall matters* (verſe 2.) Whereas you ſhall ſit upon men and *Angels*, and the weighteſt matters in the world, the greateſt things of Gods law, judging them to the greateſt penalty and puniſhment, even to eternal damnation: and are ye *unworthy* then *to judge* even of *the ſmalleſt matters.*

4. 4. And laſtly, *Becauſe it was about ſuch things, as the meaneſt Chriſtian in the Town might have taken up*, and have ended: *Set up them that are leaſt eſteemed.*

Do

*Do you not know, that the Saints ſhall Judge the World?* Doct.

I need not go far for a point, the word affords it: the Doctrine is; That *the Saints ſhall judge the world?*

It is an old truth, yea as old as the World it ſelf; you may read it in the fourth verſe of *Judes* Epiſtle: That *Enoch the ſeventh from Adam propheſied, ſaying*; Behold the Lord commeth with *ten thouſands* of his Saints. God will not only come to judgement himſelf, but he will come attended with all his Saints, even with all the godly, *to execute vengeance upon all the World.* So our Saviour told Saint *Peter*, and not only him, but all that follow him in the regeneration: *They ſhall ſit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of* Iſrael, Mat. 9. 18. *They ſhall judge the Nations, & have dominion over the people*, Wiſd. 3. 8.

And now becauſe doubt is the beſt way to attain unto knowledge, let me anſwer a doubt, that may creep in by the way; *How ſhall the Saints judge the World?* Obiect.

*Anſ.* Not by pronouncing of judgement upon the world, for that Chriſt only ſhall do: then ſhall the King ſay to them on his left hand, *Depart ye curſed*, Mat. 25. But the Saints ſhal judge the world theſe four ways. Anſw.

1. *They ſhall judge the world, by their conſent unto Chriſts judgement*, God trains up his children in this world, and educates them, and teacheth them how they may judge the world hereafter; he teacheth them in this life how to aſſent with his proceedings in the world: ſo that they are able to ſay, *Righteous art thou, O Lord, and juſt are thy Judgements,* 1.

*ment*, Pſal. 119. 137. Now if the Saints be trained in this life to aſſent unto Gods proceedings with the world: much more then will they be able to know and conſent unto Chriſts judgment, when he ſhall come with his Saints *to judge the World*: Now the Law ſaith, that *conſenters are agents*: and therefore becauſe the Saints ſhall conſent to the judgment of Chriſt, therefore they are ſaid to judge the world.

2. 2. *The Saints ſhall judge the world by their applauſe of Chriſts judgement*: they ſhall not only give conſent unto the judgement of Chriſt, but they ſhall alſo applaud it and commend it: when God ſhall ſay to all drunkards, ſwearers, lyers, Sabbath-breakers, and to all unbelieving, impenitent, and graceleſs ſinners, *Depart ye curſed into hell fire*, then though it were his own father that begat him, or his mother that bare him, though it were his own brother or ſiſter, wife or child, that hath been as dear as his own life and ſoul to him: yet they ſhall clap their hands for joy, and applaud the moſt righteous ſentence of God upon them; and they ſhall ſing *Hallelujah, ſalvation, and honour, and power, be to the Lord our God, for true and righteous are his judgements*, Rev. 19. 1, 2. Let them go accurſed as they are; for it is a righteous ſentence paſſed on them.

3. 3. *They ſhall judge the world by their Majeſty*, they ſhall not only ſtand againſt the wicked, and conſent to, & applaud that ſentence that Chriſt ſhall paſs againſt the wicked, but they ſhall be inveſted with robes of Majeſty, and with a diadem of glory: then ſhall the righteous ſhine as the ſtars in the firmament, and the wicked ſhall be amazed and aſtoniſhed

ſtoniſhed at the ſight of them: as you may read in the platform of judgement, *Mat.* 25. where Chriſt ſets his Saints over againſt the world, that ſo the world may look upon them, and be confounded at their ſight.

4. *They ſhall judge the world by their lives and converſation*: ( as *Ambroſe* ſaith rightly ) then is the world judged by them, when as the courſes and manners of the world are not found upon them: Therefore it is a pritty obſervation of *Hilary* (if it be the meaning of the Text? (I will not ſay it is) upon the 2 *Pſalm. Be wiſe ye Judges*, God hath appointed you to be Judges, to ſit on his bench with his Son: learn then to be wiſe, get to be endued with ſpiritual wiſdome and underſtanding, and to ſhine in all integrity and righteouſneſs; & then turning his ſpeech to the wicked, he ſays, *Kiſſe the Son leaſt he be angry*. However it be, yet this is a truth, that by the lives of his Saints, he will judge the world; their faith ſhall judge the worlds infidelity, their repentance ſhall judge the worlds impenitency, their accepting of, and taking the Lord Jeſus, ſhall judge their rejection and neglect of Chriſt Jeſus, their zeal ſhall judge the worlds luke-warmneſs, and their holineſſe ſhall judge the worlds prophainneſs. 4.

1. *Becauſe of the Myſtical union that is betwixt Chriſt and his Saints*: He is the head, and they are his members: now that which the head doth, we aſcribe to the whole body; when the head ſpeaks, the whole body ſpeaks; when the head ſees, the whole body ſees: ſo when Chriſt judgeth the world, the whole body of Chriſt may truly be ſaid to judge the world. *In as much as you did it unto one* *Reaſon* 1

of

*of theſe* (ſaith Chriſt) *you did it unto me* : ſo, in as much as Chriſt paſſeth ſentence, even all the members of the myſtical body of Chriſt judge with him.

*Reaſon 2* Secondly, *in regard of compaſſion* : I ſpeak not of the word (*compaſſion*) as it ſignifies (*pitty*) but of *compaſſion, of ſuffering with Chriſt*, ſeeing that Chriſt was reproached, contemned, hated, miſuſed, and condemned by the world, the Saints are likewiſe with him : ſeeing they partake of the afflictions, humiliations, and debaſements of Chriſt here, they ſhall alſo be made partakers of Chriſt in his glory. Here the wicked judge the Saints, & call them hypocrites, and diſſemblers, and laugh and ſcoff at them, and wonder at them, as the Prophet brings in Chriſt ſpeaking, *Eſa.* 8. Beloved, *I and the children that thou haſt given me, are for ſigns and wonders in* Iſrael. The wicked count them for wonders and monſters in the world, judging them hypocrites and lyers, which have nothing in them but rotenneſs and diſſimulation. Now the rule of like for like ſhall take place here, and as they were judged by the world, ſo they ſhall be judges of the world.

*Reaſon 3* Thirdly, *for great terror to all wicked men at the day of judgement* : for as it is with a thief, not onely when the judge ſhall command to hang him, but all the Juſtices, and all the Country ſhall cry out, Hang him, hang him, he is judged the more terribly : ſo God will not only ſay of all wicked and ungodly ſinners, Damn them, damn them, but he will have all the Saints in heaven, and all the Saints on earth to cry out, Away with them, away with them, let them be damned, *Pſal.* 50. 4, 5. This will

will make their judgement ſo much the more terrible.

Fourthly, *The Saints ſhall judge the world, becauſe God will ſo convince them, that their mouths ſhall be ſtopped*, They ſhall have never a ſillible to excuſe themſelves withal, when they ſhall ſee men, fleſh and blood as themſelves are, when they ſhall ſee men and women that have lived in the ſame town, enjoyed the ſame Ordinances of God lived in the ſame family, that did partake of the ſame bleſſings and of the ſame croſſes and afflictions with themſelves, ſubject alſo to the ſame corruptions and ſins as themſelves, when they ſhall ſee theſe at Chriſts right hand, they ſhall have never a word to excuſe themſelves withal: As when the Apoſtles had healed the Cripple (*Acts* 3.) if the people had judged them for wicked and peſtilent men, the Cripple would have convinced them, and ſhewed that they were of God; if they ſhould have cryed, Root them out, the Cripple would have condemned them, and told them, that they did good. And when the wicked ſhall ſee the Saints at Gods right hand, would they call them hypocrites and diſſemblers? they themſelves ſhall ſee, that they are ſincere: will they call them Puritans? why, they ſhal then ſee that their purity ſtands them in good ſtead: *Then the ungodly ſhall not ſtand in judgement, nor the ſinners in the Congregation of the righteous*, Pſ. 1. 6. Thus the point is clear. *Reaſon* 4

The firſt Uſe then is for *inſtruction*, whereby we may learn, *that the Saints by their now being Saints do now judge the world.* If by the Lives of Saints then God doth judge the world, then there is never a Saint in a Town, or City, or Pariſh in all the Country, *Uſe* 1.

Country, but he judgeth all the wicked that are about him: How? By living godly, by hating the sins of the times, by keeping his or their garments clean from the pollution of the world: For by doing this, he judgeth the world. See it in *Noah*, *Heb.* 11. 7. *By faith* Noah *being warned of God, as yet moved with fear, prepared an Ark for the saving of his house, by which he condemned the world.*

*Object.* But some men will say, Could *Noah* be said to condemn the world by making the Ark? All the world did not see him when he did it.

*Answ.* Beloved, *Noah* was making the Ark an hundred & twenty years, though it was not seen of all, yet all the world must needs hear of it, it being such a strange thing: now he condemned the world, in that the whole world did not come unto *Noah* to enquire of him in sober sadness, but rather mockt him for building the Ark; they thought him to be a pevish melancholly man, and not well in his wits, and so scoft at him, saying, *Will he make an Ark to swim upon dry Land?* Whereas they should have asked him soberly the cause why he did it: and if they had done so, *Noah* no question would have told them, that the wrath of heaven was upon the World, and that the floods of Gods vengeance were shortly to be poured down upon us: and, *because my heart hath been naught, and I have sinned & provoked the Lords wrath, I fear if I get not into this Ark which the Lord hath commanded me for to make, I shall perish.* Now because they would not come unto *Noah* to ask him this reason, therefore the world was condemned by him: even so the Saints, by making an Ark for their poor souls, even by geting into Christ, ( as the Ark was a type of Christ

Chriſt without whom none can be ſaved) the Saints, I ſay, by geting into Chriſt, do judge the whole world, when they hear there be men that be no ſwearers, and no drunkards, and that there be men that will pray, read, hear the word, confer of God and of Chriſt, and that weep and mourn for their ſins, that ſpend their times in mortification of their luſts, and endeavour after holineſs and ſanctification; the whole world, I ſay, is judged by them. How? why? they ſhould ſay: Sirs, what is the matter that you do ſo run after Sermons? that you keep ſuch a ſtir about geting faith and repentance, more than other men? that you pray, weep, faſt, and mourn, and are ſo ſtrict in your works? If thus men would but come unto Gods Saints, and ask them the reaſon of all theſe things, the Saints of God would tell them, that the wrath of God would come upon them if they did not do thus: they would never be ſaved, if they did not thus believe, and thus repent, and thus pray, and walk thus holily and preciſely, they ſhould be all damned. But the world it falls a mocking and a ſcoffing at them, and never ſeeks to prevent the wrath of God; but it ſuddenly ſeizeth on them, to their deſtruction.

Secondly, this teacheth us, that *when there is any one ſinner converted from the wickedneſs of his ways, & is become a Saint, then all the world may know that there is a new judge come to ſit upon them.* Seeſt thou a drunkard, a ſwearer, a prophane perſon converted from ſins, and now walks ſoberly, holily, and purely, ſeeſt thou a man and a woman ſtruck at a Sermon? Then know that unleſs thou comeſt out of thy ſins, unleſs thou doeſt repent, and walk holily, there is a new judge added to the reſt, that ſhall judge thee. As

our Saviour told the Pharisees, *If I through Beesebub cast out Devils, by whom do your children cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges,* Matthw. 12. 27. where Christ tells them, that their Children who were his Disciples (for some of the Pharisees children did believe in Christ and follow him, and had power from Christ to do the same works that Christ did;) Now they liked it well enough in their own children, but they could not endure it in Christ: and therefore he tells them, that their children, whom God had converted, and to whom he had given power to do the same works that he did, even they shall be their Judges to condemn them: and even so may it be with thee, thou that art a father or a mother, God having converted any of thine own children, that child shall be thy Judge and condemn thee, if thou repent not. It may be God hath converted thy brother and sister, & thou art not converted; thy own brother and sister shall condemn thee, if thou do not repent and come out of thy sins.

3. Thirdly, we may learn that *it concerns all the world to take notice of every grace in Gods children.* There is never a grace of God in any of his Saints but it shall condemn the world if it be voyd of it. The ways of the Lord are all judgements, because they judge them that will not walk in them. Every grace, yea the very thoughts of the righteous are called *Judgements*, by *Solomon*, *Prov.* 12. You may know a crooked thing by laying it to a straight line, and by that it is judged to be crooked: so the thoughts of the righteous which are right, holy and pure, shall judge the impure, unholy, and crooked thoughts of wicked men. Is the child of God humble? His humility shall judge thy pride. Is the child of God meek

meek and patient in ſuffering wrong and injuries? His meekneſs and patience ſhall judge thy choler and revenge. Hath the child of God faith given him to believe in the Lord Jeſus? His faith ſhall judge thy infidelity. Hath the child of God the ſpirit of prayer given him? It ſhall condemn thee that prayeſt onely with thine own ſpirit. Hath he zeal? His zeal ſhall judge thy luke-warmneſs. Doth his ſpeech and communication adminiſter grace to the hearers? It ſhall condemn thee that ſpeakeſt of vain and idle things. Yea, all the actions of the godly ſhall judge the wicked: and hence the Saints are ſaid *to do Gods judgements*, Zeph. 2. 3. that is, they do according to Gods judgements whereby he will judge the world: Thus they that do mourn, do judge them that do not mourn: they that bewayle their wickedneſs, and the ſins of the times, judge them that do not: they that faſt, weep, pray, and humble themſelves for the miſeries of the Church in theſe dreadful days, they judge them that make no good conſcience of their duties.

4. Fourthly, learn hence, that *all the Texts of Scripture, all the whole word of God, that is it that begets theſe Saints, and therefore they muſt needs judge the world*, the word of God begets mens hearts unto ſanctification and holineſs, whereby they become the Saints: and therefore if they, then much more ſhall the Word it ſelf judge the world: and hence it is that all the words of God in the Scripture, are called *Judgements*, Pſal. 105. 5. And our Saviour ſaith, *The word that I have ſpoken, the ſame ſhall judge you in the laſt day*, John 12. 48. *The word that I have ſpoken*, where mark he doth not ſay, *The word which you have heard*: No there are many ſwearers, and

drunkards, and prophane ungodly wretches, that will not come to Church to hear the word; there are many wicked men, and dead hearted worldlings, and rotten livers, that will not be brought to hear Gods Word: it may be at this preſent, there are many whoremongers, drunkards, and wicked perſons, that wallow in their filthineſs? in the Ale-houſe, Game-houſe, or Drab-houſe; or in the fields, or beds, or at their ſports. Well, this word that is now a preaching, whether they will hear it or no, ſhall judge them at the laſt day. Now all the wicked in *Aſhford*, that hear the word of God calling upon them to repent, and to come out of their ſins, but will not, or out of contempt of Gods word, will abſent themſelves from it; this word ſhall judge and condemn them. There is never a drunkard, ſwearer, or prophane perſon, though his pew be empty, but this word of God that denounceth the eternal wrath and vengeance of God upon them, if they come not out of their ſins, this word ſhall riſe up in judgement againſt them and condemn them eternally. Oh that they could but hear it! but the word that I have ſpoken ſhall judge you, whether you hear it or not.

Fiftly and laſtly, hence it follows, that *all the Miniſters of God ſhall alſo judge the world. Son of man* (ſaith God to the Prophet *Ezekiel*) *wilt thou judge the bloody City? Yea, thou ſhalt ſhew all her abominations*, Ezek. 22. 2. As if he ſhould have ſaid, Son of man, they are drunkards, wilt thou not tell them of it? They are whoremaſters, wilt thou not tell them of it? They are filthy idolaters, wilt thou not tell them of it? They live in their ſins, and in their abominations, and wilt thou not tell them of it? Son of man, tell them of all their abominations, and tell them

them that they ſhall go to hell, if they repent not, tell them that they are damned men if they go on, and come not out of their ſins: *Wilt thou judge them (ſon of Man?)* Beloved, there is never a Miniſter in *England*, nor never a Sermon that is preached by them, but it judgeth every Pariſh, and every man and woman in the congregation, that do not labour to do what is commanded them, and leave undone what is forbidden them: I ſay it *judgeth them*, or elſe it is a *judgement unto them.*

This then ſerves to condemn three ſorts of men in the world: Firſt, *all thoſe that deſpiſe the Saints, and that ſee not amiableneſs in their faces.* All the Countrey doth reverence the face of the Judge when he rides his circuit; Let the Judge come into the Countrey, and all the Knights, Juſtices, and Gentlemen in the Countrey will go out to meet him, and bow unto him; yet theſe Judges are but Judges of a few rogues, malefactors, and peaſants of the Countrey: Alas, they are far from the dignity of the Saints? for the Saints ſhall judge Saints and Angels: all the world, Kings and Queens, Lords and Nobles, and Captains of the Earth, the pooreſt Saint in Chriſtendom ſhall judge them. The Apoſtle, or rather, our Saviour ſaith, *to him that overcometh, and keepeth my words untill the end, to him will I give power over the Nations*, Rev. 2. 26. Whatſoever he be, if he do the works of Chriſt, and walk in the Ordinances of Chriſt, he ſhall have power over the *Nations*, not onely to contemn their pomps and vanities, their luſts and corruptions, but alſo to *convince* their conſciences, and to condemn their ſouls for ever. *Uſe* 1.

2. Shall the Saints judge the world? Then *what* 2.

*fools are the wicked that prepare not for these Judges?* When the Judge comes to an Assize, all men prepare for him; the Constables make ready their Presentments, the Juries are warned, and the Clerks make ready their Bills, *&c.* least the Judge should clap a fine upon them: and shall the Saints be Judges, and dost thou not prepare thy heart by grace? Dost thou not get purity and holiness against that day? Surely, if thou dost not, the very Saints will judge thee unmeet for heaven, and fit onely to have thy portion in hell. When Christ saith, *To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne.* Rev. 3. 21. He adds, *Let him that hath an ear, hear:* Will God make his Saints to judge the world? Then let all wicked men give ear and hear what God saith of his Church: *The Saints shall judge the world:* therefore let all men *take notice* of it, and prepare themselves for their judgement.

3. Lastly, *It condemns all those that do not see glory and majesty in the faces of Gods Saints.* There is majesty in the face of a Judge; yea a man may discover in them a kind of soveraign majesty. Even so the Saints of God have a majesty in their courses, in their looks, in their thoughts, and in all their ways; and in all these they shall judge and condemn the wicked. The wicked may give the Saints nicknames, scorn, flout, contemn, and deride them now in this life, but let me tell them, that how *lightly* soever they esteem of them, they shall be their *Judge*: They may cry out against the Saints, as long since the wicked *Sodomites* did against good *Lot*, Gen. 19. 9. *This fellow* (say they) *will be our Judges*: Why what had *Lot* done unto them? Alas, he did nothing, but when they would have done

done that Sodomitiſh villany againſt the two Angels that came to him, *Lot* went to them and ſaid, *I pray you my Brethren do not ſo wickedly.* So let the godly be in the company of wicked men, that abuſe the good creatures of God; ſay, I pray you my brethren, do not ſo wickedly, be not drunkards, be not ſwearers; brethren, I pray you do not ſo vainly, nor ſo prophanely uſe the name of God in your mouths; I pray you my brethren, do not prophane Gods Sabbaths; do not lye, do not cheat, nor cozen; if you do theſe and theſe things, the *wrath of God* will plague us for it. Oh then preſently they cry out, *Who made you our judges?* As once the Hebrews did of *Moſes*, Acts 7. 39. Doſt thou call Saints hypocrites and diſſemblers, men that judge before the time? Thou fool, wert thou not as good to ſuffer the Saints to judge thee now, whereby thou mayeſt ſee thy wretchedneſs and miſery, and by faith and *ſpeedy* repentance prevent that doom, which otherwiſe they tell thee will come upon thee, as hereafter, when if thou haſt not repented, thou ſhalt never eſcape that doom and vengeance, to which the Saints ſhall Judge thee? What, wilt thou not ſuffer them to call a drunkard, a drunkard? an adulterer, an adulterer? a blaſphemer, a blaſphemer? a carnal man, a carnal man? a worldly man, a worldly man.

It is a pretty obſervation out of *Cyprian*, that becauſe Chriſt did reprove all ſorts of religions, and ſpared none, he reproved the Scribes, the Phariſees, the Lawyers, the Souldiers, &c. and yet doth not reprove the Prieſts, becauſe they were Judges of the people, not becauſe he durſt not, but he would not: If thou revileſt the Saints, thou revileſt thy Judges. Take heed then, how thou caſts the *leaſt* aſperſion

upon the Saints; do ſay, they are raſh Judges, uncharitable cenſurers, diſſembling hypocrites; for they ſhall be your Judges. O that the people would hearken and be admoniſhed in time, to prevent this judgement. Our Saviour ſaith, that *this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men hate it*, John 3. 19. But the children of God, whom God calls *the light of the world*, theſe lights are come into the world, and men *love darkneſs more then the light*. How can the wicked eſcape damnation, that have ſo many thouſand Judges to condemn them? If the malefactor that is Indicted for murther or felony, cannot eſcape condemnation, that hath but one Judge to ſit upon him: thou that art a wicked man, living in thy ſins without Chriſt, how canſt thou eſcape, that haſt ſo many millions of Saints to judge thee, yea from *Adam* the firſt, till the laſt Saint that ſhall be upon the earth? Surely the wicked ſhall never eſcape condemnation: for,

1. 1. *God the Father*, who judgeth by way of *Authoritie*, he will condemn thee; all judgement cometh originally from him; he that hath often commanded thee to repent, and to come out of thy ſins, he ſhall condemn thee, becauſe thou haſt not obeyed him.

2. 2. *God the Son*, he will judge thee, who judgeth by way of *diſpenſation*, Acts 10. Firſt, Chriſt preacheth to thee repentance and remiſſion of ſins, to which if thou yield not, then know, that there is a day appointed, wherein he will judge thee. That Saviour that thou ſayeſt thou deſireſt, if thou part not with thy luſts, he himſelf will be thy Judge that will condemn thee.

3. *God the holy Ghoſt* will judge thee; that Spirit that

that now ſtrives and wreſtles with thee, that ſuggeſts good motions into thy heart, that puts thee in mind of repentance, biding thee leave and forſake thy ſins, and live holily, but if thou wilt not, this Spirit ſhall judge thee by way of conviction.

4. The *Word of God* ſhall judge thee, and that by way of *form*, it being the platform, according unto which Chriſt will judge the whole world. Now ſuppoſe there be forty priſoners in the Goal together, one in for murther, another in for theft, another for treaſon, (that man that knows the Law, if there be equity and juſtice in the Aſſize) he, I ſay, that knows the Law, knows who ſhall be hanged, or quartered, or burned, or ſet free; even ſo, Beloved, that man that looks through the Scriptures, that reads this or that Chapter, this or that ſentence, may know that or this man will to hell, if he repent not? Say I this of my ſelf? or ſays not the Scriptures as much? *The fearfull, and unbelieving, and all that love and make lyes, ſhall be caſt into that lake that burneth with fire and brimſtone for ever*, Rev. 12. 8. By this text the Lord Jeſus will come and judge the world: and therefore as for all ſuch as live and dye in their ſins, we may all know, that they ſhall be all damn'd in fire and brimſtone for ever. Hereby I know that all they that make no conſcience of *idle*, vain and earthly ſpeeches, and reproachful words, they ſhall give an *account* for them by this Text, *Mat.* 12. 56. Doth the Scripture ſay, that *all the wicked ſhall be turned into hell, with all the Nations that forget God?* I know it ſhall be ſo by the text, *Pſal.* 10. for all things ſhall be done according to the Scriptures, *Rom.* 2. 16. *In that day* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *when God*

*God ſhall judge the ſecrets of mens hearts by Jeſus Chriſt according to my Goſpel*; that is, juſt as Gods Miniſters preach; juſt as you find it written in the ſame Scriptures, ſo will he judge at that day.

Beloved, there is never a Text throughout the whole Scripture, that commands you to leave and forſake your ſins, but it ſhall judge you if you do not: there is not one Text of Scripture, that commands performance of any holy duty, but it ſhall riſe up in judgement againſt thee, if thou perform it not. Doth the Scripture ſay, *Be not drunk with wine wherein is exceſs?* Epheſ. 5. 18. It ſhall judge and condemn the drunkard that drinks exceſsively. Doth the Scripture ſay, *Mortifie the members which are upon the earth, fornication, uncleanneſs, inordinate affection, evil concupiſcence, and covetouſneſs, which is Idolatry?* Col. 3. 5. If notwithſtanding, theſe ſins live in thee, this Text ſhall riſe up and condemn thee to hell. Doth the Text ſay, *That the father to the children ſhall make known Gods truth*, Eſa. 28. 9. Eph. 6. 4. *Parents bring up your children in the nurture and information of the Lord?* It ſhall riſe up in judgement and condemn thoſe parents that have not inſtructed their children to fear God. Doth the Text ſay, *Thou ſhalt teach the word of God unto thy children*, and that *thou ſhalt talk of it when thou ſitteſt in thy houſe, and when thou goeſt by the way, when thou lyeſt down, and when thou riſeſt up*, Deut. 6.7. It ſhall judge thee, becauſe thou makeſt no conſcience of *holy conferrence*. All theſe and the like Texts of Scripture, ſhall riſe up and ſtand in rank to condemn thee, that haſt not ſwayed thy heart, and framed thy life according to the Scriptures.

5. 5. All the *Miniſters of God* ſhall ſit as Juſtices in com-

common (from the firſt Preacher of righteouſneſs unto the laſt) *Moſes* ſhall Judge thee, *Joſhua*, *David*, *Eſay*, *Jeremy*, *Hoſea*, *Daniel*, *Paul*, *Peter*, *&c.* they ſhall all judge you: juſt as Gods Miniſters judge you here, ſo will God; he will take all his Sermons, and clap them upon the heads of all rebellious hearers. and ſo damn them for ever,

Laſtly, *The Saints* ſhall judge you; yea, all the Saints from one end of the world to the other, they ſhall aſsiſt the juſt Judge of heaven and earth, and they ſhall be interpretative Judges. 6.

Beloved how can the wicked eſcape condemnation, that have ſo many thouſands of Judges, ſo many thouſand exhortations and reproofs, ſo many thouſand admonitions and invitations, ſo many thouſand mercies and proffers of Chriſt? When God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, ſhall judge them, when heaven and all the Angels in heaven, and all the Saints on earth, ſhall judge them, and condemn them? How canſt thou eſcape? Is there never a drunkard in this congregation? is there never a ſwearer? never a prophane perſon? never a mocker? never a railer in this town, that refuſeth to hearken to the word? The men of Ninivy ſhall riſe up in judgement againſt them, and condemn them, becauſe they ſtill live in their ſins notwithſtanding they have had not *three* days preaching, nor *forty* days ſpace onely for repentance, *but many years of grace* calling upon them. The Queen of Sheba ſhall condemn many that live in their ſins, who went many hundred miles to hear the wiſdom of *Solomon* (for, going and coming, it was well-nigh two thouſand miles) but you have the word of Chriſt preached in your ears, and ſaying, the Kingdom of God is come among you; but you

you will ſcarce ſtep out of your doors to receive it, or take any pains for it. This one woman ſhall judge them. There will be no way for the wicked to put off their judgement: then the ſons of *Eli* ſhall have none to advocate between God and them, none to cloke or cover their wickedneſs; they ſhall then have no excuſes for themſelves: for, would they excuſe themſelves? the Saints ſhall judge them: would they ſend out excuſes? the Saints ſhall cut them off.

Would they in the firſt place ſay, Alas! I was *Ignorant*, I knew not how to pray, or to read, or to meditate on the Scriptures, nor to chatechize my family; I was dull and blockiſh to conceive ſuch points as were taught me; and if I did live in ſin, it was ignorance that taught it me, I was never book-learned? Saith *Auguſtine*, this *Ignoramus* that was as ignorant and as little book-learned as thou, he eſchewed thoſe ſins that thou liveſt in, got the anointing of Gods Spirit to anoint his eyes, to ſee and know the things of God, which thou haſt neglected to get; he ſhall condemn thee.

A ſecond excuſe is *poverty*. I have no means to live on; if I ſhould run after Sermons, I ſhould beg my bread: I have a great charge to keep, and nothing but my labour to maintain them: and therefore I cannot ſpare time for *meditation*; I have no while to ſtudy the Scripture, to pray and to mourn for my ſins, and to get grace. Well, the poor Cobler that liveth next door to Saint *Anthony*, ſhall riſe up and condemn thee; he was as poor as thou, and had as great charge to keep as thou: yet he mourned and wept, he got grace, and he ſet time apart for prayer, reading, meditation, holy conference; he ſhall judge and condemn thee.

Third-

Thirdly, they ſhall have no excuſe by *imployments*; I am a ſervant, I am commanded to do this or that, I find ſo much buſineſs to follow, that I cannot find any time for ſuch things. Another ſaith, I have great imployments, I have many Irons in the fire, and therefore God, I hope, will be merciful unto me. Well then, *Cornelius* that had as many and as great imployments as thou, and *Eleazar* (*Abrahams* ſervant) who was a ſervant as well as thou, yet in as much as they walked with God, and waited upon him in his ordinances, they ſhall judge thee.

Fourthly, they ſhall have no excuſe from their *callings and trades*, I am an Inn-keeper, and if I ſhould not ſuffer drinking, and ſwearing, and gaming, I ſhould not live. Another ſaith, I am a tradeſman, and if I ſhould ask at firſt juſt ſo much as I could take, I ſhould never bring cuſtomers to my price, and ſo I ſhould not live of my trade. Well, *Rahab* was an Inn-keeper, as well as thou, and yet ſhe lived by faith, and did not ſuffer wickedneſs in her houſe. So may a tradeſman, that had the ſame trade, and the ſame imployment with thee, and as great a trade as thou, and yet have avoyded theſe ſins and evils that thou falleſt into: they ſhall judge thee.

Fifthly, they ſhall have no excuſe from the *times they live in*. Alas (ſaith one) I live in wretched times, all the world is given to ſin. Therefore if I ſhould be ſo ſtrict and *preciſe* in my ways, if I ſhould run after Sermons, pray, ſing Pſalms, &c. all the world would be againſt me. There are no profeſſors of religion but are reproached and miſcalled, I ſhould loſe all my friends, I ſhould be hated and oppoſed; yea, it may be (the time being ſuch) I ſhould be accuſed to Councils, and have my life

life queſtioned; there is nothing but diſgrace and reproach, and perſecution; wherefore I was afraid, and did diſpenſe with my conſcience. Ah wretch! that man that lived in thoſe wicked times in the ſame town with thee, that had the ſame hatred and reproach that thou waſt afraid of, that hath endured all the rebukes of Chriſt that thou waſt aſhamed of, yet he went on, and continued unto the end; *he* ſhall judge thee.

*Uſe 3.* The uſe is for the *juſt reproof of many of the Saints of God, becauſe they are not ſo circumſpect* and watchful over their ways, as they ought. *Doſt thou judge others* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *and yet doſt the ſame things thy ſelf?* Rom. 2.2. So may I ſay to all ſuch, Will you give way to ſin? will you ſuffer your luſts and corruptions to ſway you, and not endeavour to root out or kill them rather? how wilt thou then judge the world? How wilt thou then be able to riſe up in judgement againſt the wicked, to judge them for ſuch ſins wherein thou alloweſt and liveſt thy ſelf? Surely God will never account thee for a *Saint*, if he cannot *judge the world* by thee. Oh this ſhould rent the heart and bowels of thoſe that go for Chriſtians, that go for Saints, yet *live* not as Saints ſhould live. If God cannot take thee, and judge the world by thee; if he cannot take thy life, and judge the life of the Pagans, Infidels, and lukewarm, earthly, and ſecure ſinners, he will not account thee for a *Saint*. This then firſt condemns all unholineſs in the lives of them that be Saints. Beloved, if we did but live like the Saints of God in holineſs and purity in the ways of God, the Lord would put ſuch ſplendor and glory upon us, that would even daunt the very face of our enemies, and make them ſtand

ſtand amazed at Saints. But it is the contrary with us, the glory of God is departed from us: *Spain*, *France*, and other Nations fear us not: Why? righteouſneſs and purity of *Religion* is departed from us. For you ſhall have a Saint come into the company of a wicked man, and yet the ſwearer will not be afraid to ſwear before him: the drunkard will not be afraid to be drunk before him, the filthy ſpeaker will not be afraid to utter rotten ſpeeches before him: the lyer will not be afraid to lye before him: the worldly man will not be afraid to diſcover his vanities before him by his carnal and filthy conferrence. Beloved, all this is, becauſe the Saints have loſt their glory; if they did li e as Saints ought to live, the wicked would tremble to work wickedneſs before them. Though a wicked man be a drunkard, and abuſe the good creatures of God when no Saint is in his company, yet if a Saint were preſent, he would tremble, and not dare to do it. Though he were a ſwearer, a filthy talker, a vain worldling amongſt his *companions*; yet if he come in the *Saints* company, and the Saints ſtand in Gods council, then would the wicked tremble and quake to do ſuch things: then would they lick in their tongues, and not dare to ſpeak ſuch blaſphemous oaths, ſuch vain and unprofitable words, filthy lyes and ſlanders. It is ſaid of thoſe that gladly received the Apoſtles words, and were added to the Church, that *the fear of them came upon the world*, Acts 2. 41. What, did the Deſciples go with ſwords and guns, &c. to keep men in awe thereby? No, *they continued in the Apoſtles doctrine and fellowſhip*, and did live according thereto, and this made all the world afraid of them.

Secondly, *this condemns the little difference that is betwixt*

*betwixt the wicked of the world, and ſome Saints in their lives and manners* : Beloved, is there ſo little difference between the Judge and the priſoners, that any one need to come and ſay, I pray you Sir, ſhew me which is the Judge, and which is the malefactor? Is there not a plain difference both in apparel and carriage? The one is in rich apparel, and the o her in ſtinking and filthy cloathes, having his hands manacled, or his legs chained. But it is to be feared, that many of the Saints have neglected holineſs and purity in their carriage and actions which they perform, that one can hardly tell which is a Saint, and which is a reprobate. If a man deal with a Saint, and deal with a wicked man, he ſeeth no difference between them. Let a Saint do any action, either pray, hear, or confer, let a wicked man do the like, there is ſuch deadneſs, ſuch carnality, ſuch worldly-mindedneſs, ſuch luke-warmneſs of affection, that one can hardly tell which is the Saint and which is the hypocrite. Beloved, if the Saints did live like Saints, there would be as plain a difference between a Saint and a wicked man, in their lives and behaviour, as is betwixt the Judge and the Rogue that is to be judged by him. *Haſt thou not conſidered my ſervant* Job, (ſaith God) *how there is none like him in all the earth?* Job 1. 4, 8. If a man come to be a Saint indeed, there is never a wicked man in the Town and Countrey, that lives and doth as he doth, and walks as he walks, nor prays as he prays, nor hears the word as he hears it, nor that confers or meditates as he doth, that believes and repents as he doth, that ſtrives againſt his luſts as he doth: there is none like him in all the world.

Thirdly, *it condemns the ſcandalouſneſs of many Pro-*

*Profeſſors in their behaviours and action*. Oh how dow do wicked men inſult and exclaim hereupon, to ſee a Profeſſor led away and overcome by ſome luſt! what (ſay they) are theſe they that are led by the Spirit of God? are theſe your devout men? why, they can covet and ſcrape as well as others; they can couſen and lye as well as others, I, thoſe that are your great Profeſſors, and hot ſpurs, they are as covetous, as worldly, as cruel as othe s, though they will not be drunk, nor ſwear yet they will couſen and lye, as well as others. The conſideration whereof made the prophets heart to bleed in him, and to pray, Oh purge me from my murder and adultery, and all other my ſecret ſins, leſt I caſt mire and dirt in the faces of thy children, cauſiug them to bear the reproaches of my ſins. *Oh let not thoſe that ſeek thee, be aſhamed for my ſake* Pſal. 69. For thy ſake that liveſt ſcandalouſly and offenſively, for thy ſake that liveſt covetouſly and ſcraping after the world, that art ſo unjuſt in thy dealings and promiſes, mire & dirt, ſcandals and reproaches are caſt upon the children. For thy looſneſs, yea for thy carnal liberty it is that the true profeſſors of Religion are reproached, ſuſpected, and hardly cenſured in the world: what did *Jacob* when he was to walk with the people of the Land? *Gen.* 35. 5, 6. he purged his houſe, and (ſaith the text) *the terror of God was upon all the City*, he made them all to tremble at him. I tell you, all the wicked in *Aſhford* would tremble at the Profeſſors that live therein, if they did live and carry themſelves like *Saints indeed*. Oh if all thoſe that did profeſs themſelves to be Chriſtians, were Chriſtians indeed, and that pro-

feſs themſelves to be Saints, were Saints indeed, living in thepower and ſanctification of holineſs; then men would ſay, of themſelves, of a truth God is in theſe men, Chriſt dwells in them, and the ſpirit of God leads and governs them indeed. If thou wouldſt judge the world, take heed how the world judgeth thee, leſt thou with the world be condemned eternally. It is ſaid that *Herod feared* John, *becauſe he was a juſt man*, Mar. 6. 23. So if all thy neighbours did know that thou wert a juſt man, a holy and conſcionable man in all thy ways, and in all thy actions, and that cannot endure ſwearing, lying, and deceit; but did ſee that thou waſt juſt, and one that feared God truly, they would all fear thee.

The

# The punishment of unworthy Communicants at the Table of the LORD.

Delivered in a SERMON of Mr. *WILLIAM FENNERS*, upon this ensuing Text.

1 Cor. 11. 30.

*For this cause many are sick and weak among you, and many asleep.*

THE Apostle, in this Chapter, taxeth two abuses which were then amongst the *Corinthians*: First, *the unseemly habit of women* in the congregation, from the first *verse* to the 17. Secondly, *the prophane usage of the holy Communion*, both by men and women, from the 17 verse to the end of the chapter: And herein from the 23 verse to the end of the 25. he sets down the Institution of the Lords Supper; and from thence raised a point of Doctrine,

*Doct.* 1. That *Whatsoever would come to this holy Communion, they must examine themselves*, that so they may come worthily, else it were better that they never came.

So we read in the 28 verse; *But let a man examine himself, and so eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup*: as if the Apostle had said, Unless a man examine himself, and search his own heart, & find out his sins, and dive into the secrets of his soul, to bring out his hidden corruptions, confessing them, and judging himself for them before the Lord, let him never presume to come unto the Holy Sacrament.

And then he proves it by three Reasons.

The first is taken from the end of the *Sacrament*; for it is the remembrance of the death and passion of Christ: so it is in the 26 verse: *So oft as you eat of this Bread, and drink of this Cup, you shew forth the Lords death till he come.* It is a Reason that the men of this world are not acquainted withal, and therefore it was a good wish of a Reverend Father, that the Sacrament should never be ministred, but there should be a Sermon, to teach men the nature of it, and to instruct them in the mistery thereof. We approach unto the Sacrament hand over head, living in our sins, not shewing by our coming that Christ is dead: we say, and profess that Christ dyed for our sins, and yet notwithstanding our sins live in us, as if Christ had not dyed for us, or as if we would proclaim, that his death hath had no effect in us. For were we dead with Christ, then sin and the living occasions of sin, would be dead in us also. My Beloved, we should never come to this Sacrament, but we should

ſhould ſhew forth the Lords death thereby, that is, that Chriſt is dead (or, rather dyed) for ſin, and that ſin is alſo dead in us.

The ſecond reaſon is taken from *the damned wrong we offer unto Chriſt*, if we come in our ſins, for we are guilty of the body and blood of Chriſt, as it is in the 27 verſe; nay, thou ſinneſt againſt the Lord Ieſus Chriſt not a jot leſs, than *Pilat* that condemned him, than *Iudas* that betrayed him, & the Iews that cryed out, *crucifie him, crucifie him*: yea, thou art as much guilty, as if thy own hand in thy own perſon had been imbrued in his blood. Now we know it is a horrible ſin to be guilty of the blood and murther of an ordinary man, yea of a very Rogue; how much more is it a great and fearful ſin to be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord Ieſus Chriſt the only and eternal Son of God? yet comeſt thou to this holy Communion, and bringeſt no leſs than the guilt of the body and blood of Chriſt upon thy ſoul. *Reaſ. 2.*

The third Reaſon is taken from the *woful wrong and injury that man brings upon his own ſoul, that cometh unpreparedly without examination of himſelf*; in the 20 verſe, *he eateth and drinketh his own damnation*; that is, he maketh himſelf guilty of, and liable to the ſame vengeance that the crucifiers of Chriſt had inflicted on them. *Good had it been for that man* (ſaith Chriſt of *Iudas*) *if that he had never been born.* So may I ſay, Good had it been for that man and that woman if they had never been born, who come unworthily unto the Table of the Lord, for when they eat of that bread, they eat their own bane; & when they drink of that cup, they drink their own damnation. *Reaſ. 3.*

*Use* 1. Then cometh he to make some use of this point; and first, he condemns those that *as they come, so they go away from the Sacrament*; no more holy, no more gracious than before; but as they come in their sins, so they go away in their sins; they came drunkards and they go away drunkards; they came worldlings and they go away worldlings; they came mockers, and they go away mockers; they came in their wrath, anger, malice, deadness, hypocrisie, and lukewarmness, and so they go away, still never the better, but living in them as they did before: As in the 17 verse. *You come together* (saith the Apostle) *not for the better, but for the worse*: Whereas if they would have come worthily, they should have gone away the better, they should have received more grace and holiness to walk with God, more power and strength against sin & corruption; yea the Lord would have ratified & confirmed his Covenant with them; whereas living in contention, and not coming with preparation, they grow the worse by the Sacrament. The *Corinthians* thought that the Apostle wolud have praised them for their coming to Church, and receiving the Sacrament, *Shall I praise you in this?* (saith the *Apostle*) *I praise you not.*

*Use* 2. Secondly, He makes a use of terror against all those *that dare come in their sin unto this holy Sacrament of the Lord*; for that man that cometh in his sins unto the table of the Lord.

1. Though he may think he receives the Communion, yet he doth not; for this is not the Table of the Lord, but the table of devils. It is true, thou receivest the Sacrament of the body & blood of Christ, but yet coming in thy sins, thou receivest

eſt not his body and blood, as of a Saviour to ſave thee from thy ſins: Indeed thou receiveſt the body and blood of Chriſt ſacramentally; but it is as the Iudge to condemn thee unto the pit of deſtruction, for thy damned impudence in coming ſo unworthily unto this holy Sacrament: for that man cannot eat the body of Chriſt, that is not a member of Chriſt; therefore thou muſt be a limb of Chriſt, if thou ever wilt receive worthily.

2. If a man come unto the Sacrament, and come in his ſins, he cometh to his own deſtruction: for though it be a ſweet banquet to refreſh an humble ſoul, and to make it walk more cheerfully in the ways of God, all the days of his life; yet he that cometh unto it in his ſins, and receiveth it in his uncleanneſs, ſpeedeth thereby his own damnation, and receiveth it as his *viaticum* to hell. The Apoſtle compares Baptiſm to the Red-ſea, 1 *Cor.* 10. from which place *Chryſoſtom* ſaith, that as the red-Sea was a way for the *Iſraelites* to paſs through to *Canaan*, ſo it was as a grave to ſwallow up the *Egyptians* to their deſtruction. So the Lords Supper is as a grave or open pit whereby many plunge themſelves into eternal deſtruction, but as a chariot to the godly to carry them to heaven.

Thirdly, by coming in thy ſins, *thou makeſt thy ſelf lyable to Gods temporary plagues and judgements*; as appears in my text, *For this cauſe many are ſick and weak among you, and many are fallen aſleep*, (For this cauſe) which is not only a note of concluſion, but of the cauſe: *For this cauſe*, namely, becauſe they examine not themſelves, but come in their ſins and receive it unworthily. One man hath a diſeaſe in his body, that he liveth not out half his *Uſe* 3.

days; another is sick and weak near unto death; a third is fallen asleep: Wherefore? why (saith the Apostle) for this cause of receiving unworthily the Sacrament of the Lords Supper.

Use 4. Fourthly, *For instruction*, that because the people of God as well as wicked men, are guilty of unworthily coming to the Lords Table, therefore he exhorts them, that if they would not have the Lord judge them, that they would judge themselves, as in the 31 verse. *For if we would judge our selves, we should not be judged of the Lord.* If we would sit down and search our own hearts, and try our own spirits, and pry into our bosoms, and out with our old corruptions, and unclean lusts, and enter into a new Covenant with God, of holy walking before him for after time, if we would thus judge and condemn our selves, and mortifie our sins, coming with grace unto this holy banquet, then we might come with comfort unto this blessed Sacrament, assuring our selves that we shall escape the judgement of the Lord. For those of the Corinthians whom God struck with sickness, weakness, and death, it was to instruct others that are well and in health, that they venture not to enter upon these holy mysteries with unholy hearts, and unclean hands.

Use 5. Fifthly, he concludeth with a use of exhortation in the 33, and 34 verses. *Wherefore brethren, when ye come to partake of the holy Communion, tarry one for another*: As if he should have said, Away with all your disorders, and come not with a temporal, but with a spiritual appetite; provide not thy teeth, but thy heart for these dainties: for this is not a feast for the body, but for the soul; there-

therefore away with all your diſorders and unſeemly coming unto this bleſſed Sacrament, take heed of this ſin and repent among you, and of all other ſins which you know your own conſcience to be guilty of, and ſo come unto this holy Communion.

Now, the verſe that I have read to you, is a part of that uſe of terror which the Apoſtle doth make againſt the unworthy receivers of the Sacrament; and it contains Gods ſevere hand and judgement againſt thoſe that come unworthily: wherein note three things.

First, *the cauſe of their puniſhment*, which is the unworthy eating of the communio: *For this cauſe* many are ſick and weak among you, & many are fallen aſleep. 1.

Secondly, *the puniſhment inflicted* for this ſin; *weakneſs, ſickneſs*, and *mortality*: for it ſeems (ſaith *Peter Martyr*) that the Lord ſent a ſore plague and peſtilence among them to revenge himſelf of them for their abuſe of the Sacrament, for this cauſe. 2.

Thirdly, there is the *delinquents*, which are you Corinthians: *Many are ſick and weak among you*, and in them all others that come unpreparedly to the Sacrament. 3.

*Chryſoſtom* notes here, that our Apoſtle doth not fetch here an argument or example of judgement from others, as he had done in the former chapter, but he brings it from themſelves, who ſenſibly felt the wrath of God upon them, for this very ſin. As if the Apoſtle ſhould have ſaid, How is it, O *Corinthians*, that you dare venture to come unto the Communion ſo unpreparedly, and that you

you have no more regard of so weighty a business as is the receiving of the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ? See you not the wrath of God upon your dwellings, and the curse of heaven to take hold of your town? you see it this very time that some are sick and very weak amongst you, near unto death; and others have been struck with death before your eyes, and the wrath of God is not removed, but lyes yet upon you: What will you always go on, and never cease to provoke the Lord to indignation and wrath against you for your sins, until his jealousie hath utterly consumed you, and clean cut you off? And howsoever many of you may think that this sickness, weakness, and mortality comes upon you by chance, as from the infection of the ayr, or other *secundry* causes: I tell you nay, but it is for this cause only, even your unworthy coming to the Supper of the Lord. Whence we may observe this point of instruction.

*Doct.* 2 That *God doth most severily punish the unworthy receivers of the Sacrament of the Lords Supper.*

He punished the *Corinthians* herewith sickness, weakness, feavors, pestilence, death temporal, and God knows how many with death eternal. *Theodoret* observes, that the Apostle told them of a thing that was acted amongst them, for if he had told told them of such judgements as had been hid from them, and not manifest before their eyes, as if they had not felt the sickness of their bodies, & heard the bells touling daily in their ears, they might have thought that the Apostle had but lyed unto them. So the people of Israel, as we may read

ir

in 1 Cor. 10. 2,3. *They were baptized in the Cloud and in the Sea, and they did all eat the ſame ſpiritual meat, and drink the ſame ſpiritual drink*; yet as in the fifth verſe, *with many of them God was not well pleaſed.* Nay, God was ſo wrath with them, that within the ſpace of fourty years, many thouſand of them were deſtroyed by death here, and God knoweth how many thouſands of them in hell. For God ſpeaketh of *Hell* as well as of *Death*; & their ſin was ſo great, that it made God confirm it with an Oath, that they ſhould *never enter into his reſt.* And St, *Cyprian* ſaith, that the Lord hath ſhewed many miracles, and declared many fearful judgements upon the unworthy receivers of the Sacrament.

*Judas*, who *Ambros* thought received the Sacrament (though *Hilary* and others that he did not, but only that he did eat the Paſſeover, and was coming to the Sacrament alſo) but ſee his doom, *John* 13. as ſoon as ever he received the Sop, *he Devil entred into him*; and ſo it is with all ſuch as come to the Communion in their ſins without repentance, and unfaigned reſolution of walking ever after worthy of the Sacrament; I ſay unto all and every one of them, that as ſoon as ever thou receiveſt the Bread and Wine into thy mouth, thou receiveſt the Devil together with it; as ſoon as ever it goeth down into thy body, the Devil goeth after it, and taketh more full poſſeſſion of thy heart and ſoul.

Now the Reaſon why the Lord doth ſo ſeverely puniſh both with temporal judgements, & with ſpiritual curſes, the unworthy receivers of the Sacrament, is, *in regard of the Author of the Sacra-* *Reaſ.* 1.

*Sacrament*, who is Chriſt: and that not only as he was *man*, (as the Papiſts would make us believe) but Chriſt as he was *God* did inſtitute the ſame. So ſaith the Apoſtle in the 23 verſe, *The Lord Jeſus Chriſt in the ſame night that he was betrayed, took bread and brake it, when he had given thanks, and ſaid, Take ye, and eat ye, for it is my body which is broken for you.* Now if the Lord Jeſus did inſtitute it, what an accurſed thing is it for any to defile it, and ſo ſin againſt Chriſt? It is a damnable thing to ſin againſt God, but to ſin againſt *God, as he is God in Chriſt*, is damnably damnable. The Holy Ghoſt in the ſecond Pſalm exhorts *to kiſs the Son leſt he be angry, and ſo thou periſh*: as if he ſhould ſay, Adore the Son, adore the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and ſo come & eat of this bread, and drink of this cup; for if he be angry, thou wilt ſurely periſh: If thou ſin againſt God and ſo go out of the way, Chriſt upon thy repentance will ſet thee in again; but if thou ſinneſt againſt God in Chriſt, who is the Way, the Life, and the Truth, thou ſhalt ſurely periſh from the right way, for there is no other way to bring thee in again, *Act.* 4. 12. Therefore woful is thy caſe, and miſerable is thy condition if thou ſineſt againſt Chriſt, prophaning his holy ordinances which he himſelf hath inſtituted, and abuſeſt and deſpiſeſt that bleſſed ſpirit of his, that comes to ſeal unto thee the redemption that he hath purchaſed by his blood. Better had it been for thee that thou hadſt never been born: for if he be wrath, bleſſed only are all they that put their truſt in him, and come preparedly unto his holy Ordinance, and that by faith imbrace the Lord Jeſus

Jeſus Chriſt. But woe unto all prophane perſons that live in their ſins; if his wrath be but a little kindled, then woe to all drunkards, ſwearers, and unclean perſons; but bleſſed is that man that is come out of his ſins: for if his wrath be ſo terrible when it is but a little kindled, O how much more fearful will it be when it is deeply incenſed! Therefore if thou comeſt unto this holy Sacrament in thy ſins, without due preparation & examination, what doeſt thou but even ſet the wrath of God burning upon thy ſoul and body from the very bottom of hell?

When the Lord delivered the *Law* upon Mount *Sinai*, he commanded the people to ſanctifie themſelves; yea, if a beaſt did but touch the Mountain, he muſt dye for the ſame, even be ſtoned to death, or thruſt through with a dart, *Heb.* 12. Much more then now, when the Lord doth deliver the Goſpel, eſpecially the ground-work and maſterpiece thereof, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and that in the moſt bleſſed manner that ever God exhibited himſelf unto man; how much more doth God require purity and holineſs, that all ſuch as come to receive the Lord Jeſus Chriſt in the bleſſed ſacrament, ſhould be ſanctified, purging their hearts and cleanſing their ſouls from all their ſin and uncleanneſs? Should not a beaſt touch the Mountain where God did appear, and dareſt thou touch the body of Chriſt, and drink his bleſſed blood in thy ſins? The very Angels of heaven will curſe thee, and the Clouds of heaven will poor down ſhowers of vengeance upon thee: for God hath more ſevere puniſhments to inflict upon ſinners under the Goſpel, than he uſed under

*Sacrament*, who is Chriſt: and that not only as he was *man*, (as the Papiſts would make us believe) but Chriſt as he was *God* did inſtitute the ſame. So ſaith the Apoſtle in the 23 verſe, *The Lord Jeſus Chriſt in the ſame night that he was betrayed, took bread and brake it, when he had given thanks, and ſaid, Take ye, and eat ye, for it is my body which is broken for you.* Now if the Lord Jeſus did inſtitute it, what an accurſed thing is it for any to defile it, and ſo ſin againſt Chriſt? It is a damnable thing to ſin againſt God, but to ſin againſt *God, as he is God in Chriſt*, is damnably damnable. The Holy Ghoſt in the ſecond Pſalm exhorts *to kiſs the Son leſt he be angry, and ſo thou periſh*: as if he ſhould ſay, Adore the Son, adore the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and ſo come & eat of this bread, and drink of this cup; for if he be angry, thou wilt ſurely periſh: If thou ſin againſt God and ſo go out of the way, Chriſt upon thy repentance will ſet thee in again; but if thou ſinneſt againſt God in Chriſt, who is the Way, the Life, and the Truth, thou ſhalt ſurely periſh from the right way, for there is no other way to bring thee in again, *Act.* 4. 12. Therefore woful is thy caſe, and miſerable is thy condition if thou ſineſt againſt Chriſt, prophaning his holy ordinances which he himſelf hath inſtituted, and abuſeſt and deſpiſeſt that bleſſed ſpirit of his, that comes to ſeal unto thee the redemption that he hath purchaſed by his blood. Better had it been for thee that thou hadſt never been born: for if he be wrath, bleſſed only are all they that put their truſt in him, and come preparedly unto his holy Ordinance, and that by faith imbrace the Lord Jeſus

Jeſus Chriſt. But woe unto all prophane perſons that live in their ſins; if his wrath be but a little kindled, then woe to all drunkards, ſwearers, and unclean perſons; but bleſſed is that man that is come out of his ſins: for if his wrath be ſo terrible when it is but a little kindled, O how much more fearful will it be when it is deeply incenſed! Therefore if thou comeſt unto this holy Sacrament in thy ſins, without due preparation & examination, what doeſt thou but even ſet the wrath of God burning upon thy ſoul and body from the very bottom of hell?

When the Lord delivered the *Law* upon Mount *Sinai*, he commanded the people to ſanctifie themſelves; yea, if a beaſt did but touch the Mountain, he muſt dye for the ſame, even be ſtoned to death, or thruſt through with a dart, *Heb.* 12. Much more then now, when the Lord doth deliver the Goſpel, eſpecially the ground-work and maſterpiece thereof, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and that in the moſt bleſſed manner that ever God exhibited himſelf unto man; how much more doth God require purity and holineſs, that all ſuch as come to receive the Lord Jeſus Chriſt in the bleſſed ſacrament, ſhould be ſanctified, purging their hearts and cleanſing their ſouls from all their ſin and uncleanneſs? Should not a beaſt touch the Mountain where God did appear, and dareſt thou touch the body of Chriſt, and drink his bleſſed blood in thy ſins? The very Angels of heaven will curſe thee, and the Clouds of heaven will poor down ſhowers of vengeance upon thee; for God hath more ſevere puniſhments to inflict upon ſinners under the Goſpel, than he uſed under

der the Law, though then he struck them with more visible and sensible plagues and judgements than ordinarily he bringeth upon men now: as *Gahezi* for his Covetousness was strucken with Leprosie; *Corah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*, the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up quick, for their rebellion against the Lord: *Er* and *Onan* were strucken dead for their wickedness: *Jeroboam* had his hand withered for stretching of it forth to strike the Lords prophet. And though the Lord bring not such sensible punishments now as he did then, yet he knows how to punish the world a thousand times more than he did then, at this time. As a Father hath other kinds of punishments for his Son, when he is grown up, than he had when he was in coats, and but a child; then a twig or two would serve the turn; but if he comes to mans estate, and then rebel against his father, it may be that he will disinherit him, and cast him out of his Family. So in former times God did scourge and whip his people when they sinned against him; but now he hath drawn out his Church to this Age, even to the age of the Gospel, he hath severer strokes of plagues and curses, wherewith to confound all prophane and impenitent sinners, that dare to abuse that blessed Sacrament of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The second reason is, *in regard of the matter of the Sacrament*, which is Christ also; who as he was the efficient cause, so in regard of Sacramental relation, he is the matter of the Communion, 1 Cor. 10. 16. *The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the Communion of the Blood of Christ?*

and

*and the Bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of Chriſt?* Now the better matter any thing is of, the more hainous is the defilement of it: A maſter will not be ſo angry for caſting his earthen veſſels into the mire, as he will be for caſting his rich Jewels. The Bread & Wine in the Sacrament, are the bleſſed communion of the precious body and blood of Chriſt, and dareſt thou ſo defile them? Knoweſt thou not, that thou doſt greatly increaſe the wrath of the Lord againſt thy ſoul thereby? That ſoul whatever it was from *Dan* to *Beerſheba*, that came in his uncleanneſs to partake of any of thoſe holy things which the Children of *Iſrael* hallowed to the Lord, whether he were man or woman, rich or poor, that perſon was to be cut off from the preſence of the Lord, *Levit.* 12. whereto the Lord ſets his Seal for the confirmation thereof (*I am the Lord*:) And as ſure as I am the Lord, ſo will I ſee it accompliſhed. So my beloved, let me ſay unto you of *England*, from *Dover* to *New-Caſtle*, or from the one end of the Town to the other, that ſoul who toucheth any of theſe holy things with an impure heart, and cometh to partake of them with his uncleanneſs upon him, living in his ſins, and wallowing in his luſts, caſting off the fear of the Lord, and making no conſcience to walk in Gods ways, that ſoul ſhall ſurely be cut off that cometh ſo unworthily to the Table of the Lord; not only the hand that taketh it, but even the very ſoul of him that ſo cometh, ſhall periſh from the preſence of the Lord. So *Levit.* 7. 20. *That ſoul that eateth of the fleſh of the Sacrifices of peace-offerings that pertain unto the Lord*

*Lord, having his uncleanneſs upon him, even that ſoul ſhall be cut off from his people.* Now you know that all thoſe ſacrifices had relation unto Chriſt, but yet under the Law they were but ſhadows, & typical relations, and were not ſo lively and effectual means for the exhibiting of Chriſt, as the Lords Supper is: and therefore, if ſuch as came in their uncleanneſs unto them, were puniſhed with no leſs puniſhment than a cutting off from fellowſhip with the Lords people; what wrath and vengeance will the Lord bring upon thee, that cometh with thy uncleanneſs upon thee unto this holy Communion? *Auguſtine* ſaith, That man that receiveth the Sacrament unworthily, receiveth a great plague to his own ſoul, and a great torment to his own conſcience, yea and heapeth up a ſtore of wrath unto himſelf againſt the day of wrath. Methinks thou that liveſt in thy ſins, and wilt not come out of them, when thou heareſt theſe words (*This is my Body*) and ſeeſt the bread broken before thy face, it ſhould even make thee tremble and quake to look upon it, more to touch it, and moſt of all to taſte it: for it is the Communion of the Body and Blood of Chriſt, and how dareſt thou come in thy ſins to defile it?

*Reaſ. 3.* A third Reaſon is, *in regard of the form of the Sacrament*, which is Chriſt too; for as he is the efficient cauſe that inſtituted it, and as he alſo is the matter of the Sacrament, ſo in the third place Chriſt is the form of the Sacrament alſo, wherein the confirming grace of God is ſealed up unto thee. Now as it is treaſon for a man to offer contempt unto the Kings broad Seal, ſo cer-

certainly it is high treaſon againſt this King of Kings, to contemn this bleſſed Sacrament, which is the Seal of the Righteouſneſs of Faith. If thou ſhouldſt clip the Kings Coyn, I will ſay that thou art a Traytor. Oh what a traytor art thou then, yea, accurſed traytor in the account of God and Chriſt, if thou clippeſt his holy communion, if thou clip it of thy examination, and preparation, and ſo come hand over head, not regarding ſo holy an Ordinance! Thou ſinneſt againſt the Court of heaven. That which Saint *James* ſpeaks in general of the whole worſhip of God (*draw near unto God*) let me apply it in particular unto this drawing near unto God in this Holy Communion, *Jam.* 4. 8. *Cleanſe your hands ye ſinners and purifie your hearts ye double minded*: Draw near unto God in the hearing, reading, and meditating on Gods word; draw near unto God in prayer, and in this holy Sacrament, and receive it for your amendment of life. (*Draw near unto God*) I, that I will, (ſaith the wicked man) I will come to Church, and draw near unto the holy Communion. Will you ſo? (ſaith the Apoſtle:) No, firſt, *Cleanſe your hands ye ſinners, and purge your hearts ye double minded.* As if he ſhould ſay, never think to draw near unto God, or ſetting foot on this holy ground, and handling thoſe holy myſteries of Chriſt, unleſs thou firſt purge thy heart, and cleanſe thy ſoul from all thy filthy luſts and curſed corruptions, leſt otherwiſe, thou coming in thy ſins with thy uncleanneſs on thee, and ſo receiving unworthily, thou eateſt and drinkeſt thine own damnation, (as our Engliſh tranſlation hath it) damnation

to thy self and not to another. No, God forbid that thou shouldest by thy unworthy coming, eat & drink condemnation to another, for thou that art a child of God, and comest unto the Table of the Lord with repentance, and a sound measure of preparation, though others that sit in the same pew with thee, for their prophaneness eat and drink their own damnation, yet thou shalt be sure to receive the Seal and assurance of thy reconciliation and salvation, with free acceptance of God, through the Lord Jesus Christ; for every man shall bear his own burden.

*Reas.* 4. The last Reason is, *in regard of the end of the Sacrament*, which is Christ also: For as he is the efficient, material, and formal cause, so Christ is also the final cause of the Sacrament: so it is in the 26 verse, *As oft as you eat of this Bread, and drink of this Cup, you shew forth the Lords death until he come.* Not that Christ may be eaten with the teeth, or corporally received in the Sacrament, or as if he were there productively, or transubstantially, (as the Papists say) no, the Apostle shews, that the end of the celebration of this Sacrament, is to shew forth the death of Christ until he come.

*Object.* I. But (say the Romists) *Unless we eat the Body, and drink the Blood of Christ really, and not the consecrated bread and wine, how can any man by this unworthy communicating, eat and drink his own damnation, and make himself guilty of the body and blood of Christ?*

*Answer.* I answer, a man cannot bring this guilt upon himself by eating a piece of bread, or drinking a cup of wine; but the Apostle hath an answer so fitted

fitted for this, as that all the Papiſts in the world ſhall never be able to gain-ſay, and therefore I pray you to mark it: for he hath joyned theſe two verſes together; *As oft as you eat of this bread and drink of this cup, you ſhew forth the Lords death till he come: Wherefore whoſoever eateth this bread and drinketh this cup of the Lord unworthily, ſhall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord*: Even for this cauſe, becauſe it is the ſhewing forth of Chriſts death till he come. Therefore if thou eateſt and drinkeſt unworthily, coming in thy ſins, and reſolveſt to go on in them, that as thou wert proud before thou cameſt to the Sacrament, ſo thou art ſtill; as thou wert cholerick, angry, and impatient before, ſo thou art ſtill; as thou wert luke-warm and dead-hearted in Gods ſervice before, ſo thou remaineſt ſtill: Remember I pray thee, that as oft as thou haſt come unto the communion in thoſe thy ſins, thou haſt made thy ſelf guilty of the body and blood of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Therefore I beſeech you to look to it, and in time to repent, and pray with the Prophet *David*, Pſal. 51. *Deliver me from blood guiltineſs, O Lord*, even from the blood of thy Son, leſt one day it be laid unto my charge, and required ſtraitly at my hands. *For*, *For this cauſe many are ſick among you, and many are weak.*

Is it ſo then, that the Lord doth ſo ſevere'y puniſh the unworthy receivers of the Sacrament? take notice, (I pray you) then from whence cometh all *ſickneſs*, *weakneſs*, and *mortality*; and the reaſon why the Lord doth ſend ſo many kind of ſorrows, croſſes, and miſeries upon men; namely, becauſe of the unworthy receiving of the

Lords Supper. So saith Master *Calvin*, why do you wonder to see such wars, and rumours of wars, that there is so many bloodsheds, so many Towns and Cities ruinated, and so many Countries sacked and depopulated, so many calamities come upon the Churches abroad, and so many plagues & scourges to over-run Christendom at this day, is not the cause plain enough? Men come unto the Table of the Lord carelesly and unworthily. And beloved, we shall never see the Lord take away his judgements here from the earth, until we betake our selves to a more diligent and holy receiving of the Sacrament. For this very cause there are so many strange diseases amongst us, never formerly known nor heard of until these days; as, the French Pox, the English Sweat (as they call it) that even the Phisitians themselves are blunted at them; and (as *Peter Martyr* well observes) hence are all diseases, as plagues, pestilences; (which were late amongst us) dropsie, bloody-flux, Agues, Apoplexies, Convulsions, burning Feavers, and Impostumes, *&c.* and all for this cause. One man hath fallen into a feaver, and we wonder at the cause whence he took it: but in truth the Communion hath cast him into his Feaver, and the Lord will avenge himself on him for the same. Another is sick, and he thinks that a cold hath brought it upon him, but it is the unworthy receiving of the Sacrament that is truly the cause of it. A third man dyeth before his time, even in his full strength, before in the course of nature he hath ended half his days; but the cause is the unworthy coming to the Communion, which hath taken hold of him, and cut off the thread of his life. Many

Many there be that expound theſe words in a *ſpiritual* ſence, *Many are ſick and weak, and many are fallen aſleep*; that is to ſay, many have their conſciences ſeared, and their hearts hardned, *&c.* And this is true alſo, that becauſe men come unpreparedly, they have their hearts hardned, and their conſciences ſeared, and their ſouls plagued with many ſpiritual plagues. But it is as true alſo in *temporal* judgements, thou haſt had many afflictions, and much ſickneſs laid upon thee; but thank thy ſelf for it: namely, becauſe thou haſt come unworthily unto the communion, thou haſt had much weakneſs in thy body, which hath coſt thee much money, and weakned thy eſtate; but thy unholy coming unto the Sacrament, is that which thou mayſt thank for it. Thou haſt been reproached and contemned, and endured much ſhame; but take notice of it that it proceeds from the fore-going cauſe, and that is a ſpecial reaſon why the Lord hath brought theſe and many evils upon thee. Thou canſt ſay the Commandments for the moſt part by rote,, but thou didſt never know the myſtery of this one Commandment, *Thou ſhalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.* Behold: The Communion is one of Gods own names, and how many thouſands are there in the world that take this name of God in vain? Is there never a drunkard here in this congregation, that hath been at the Sacrament? Is there never a Whoremonger, never a covetous worldling? Where is the man, whoſoever he is among you all, that is ſuch a one? he is in the ſtate of damnation. Is there never a luke-warm Chriſtian, that contents himſelf with

a formal worſhip, and a dead performance of holy duties, that hath no Zeal for God, nor courage for his truth, but is careleſs of all Gods Commandments? Whoſoever amongſt you are guilty of theſe ſins, or any other, and hath come unto this holy Communion in them, they are the perſons, that how oft ſoever they have received, ſo oft they have taken this name of the Lord in vain: And if I ſhould examine this Congregation from the one end of it unto the other, I fear that every pew would yield ſome one, if not many that have taken a Communion (which is one of Gods names) in vain. Should I but examine thee that comeſt unto the Communion this day, how by the Laſt Sacrament thou receivedſt, and the laſt Sermon thou haſt heard, thy faith is ſtrengthned, thy repentance renewed, and thy obedience is increaſed, and thy care doubled for to walk with God? whether thou art made by them more zealous for God, more forward in his worſhip and ſervice, and every day more holy and heavenly minded; if not, then thou haſt taken this *Name of the Lord thy God in vain*, and *the Lord will not hold thee guiltleſs*; that is, the Lord will not take away the guilt of thy conſcience, but he will let thy ſin lye open, and thou ſhalt not be cleanſed from it, nor juſtified by the very blood of Jeſus Chriſt, but it ſhall reſt upon thee to thy utter ruine and deſtruction, unleſs thou forſake thy ſins, and ſo come preparedly unto this holy Table and Banquet. I know there is a covenant of grace, a ſweet refreſhing for every humbled ſoul that is hungry and broked for his ſins, and for every poor diſtreſſed conſcience: Let all ſuch

come

come and lay their ſins upon Chriſts Croſs, and welcome: but if there be any that come in their ſins, and will not reforme their lives, but be as they came, ſinners, and ſo they mean to continue, the Lord himſelf will lay this mans ſins upon his own head, and they ſhall never be taken away from him, but Chriſt ſhall at the day of judgement pronounce him a guilty perſon, to his eternal condemnation.

King *Belſhazzar* that abuſed but the holy veſſels of the Temple, and the Cups thereof, what a diſmal plague befel him for it? *Dan.* 5. 27, 28. *God hath numbred thy Kingdom and finiſhed it, thou art weighed in the Ballance, and art found too light, thy Kingdom is departed from thee, and is given to the Medes and Perſians.* So, beloved brethren, if any of you ſhall abuſe this Cup of the Lord coming to it with a filthy unclean heart, and polluted conſcience, and earthly affections, there is a hand-writing againſt every ſoul that thus cometh this day unto the Table of the Lord: thou art numbred and weighed, and found too light: thou, O man, and woman, whoſoever thou art that prophaneſt and contemneſt theſe holy things of God, thou ſhalt be found out, and the Lord will keep thee out by his ſpiritual plagues, & thy ſin ſhall never be done away, but required at thy hands, & ſtand in everlaſting record againſt thee: O my brethren, that you would but ſeriouſly conſider it, and look about you, it being ſo weighty a thing that ſo neerly concerns every one of you.

But I would not have any poor broken heart and humble ſoul to miſtake me, and ſo thereby

be discouraged: but give me leave (I pray you) to use the words of the Prophet, though spoken in another sense, *Psal.* 115. *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy Name give the glory.* So let me apply this Doctrine unto the comfort of all poor broken hearted sinners, and beat off all carnal prophane wretches that live in their sins; not unto you, O drunkards, and swaggerers, not unto you whoremasters and unclean persons, that wallow in ungodliness, I say not unto you, but unto the poor afflicted soul and contrite spirit that lieth bleeding and gasping under the weight of his sin, and that trembles and fears, being oppress with the sense of its own unworthiness, panting and breathing after Christ Jesus, and suing earnestly unto the Throne of grace for mercy and forgiveness: unto thee only belongs this comfort, and therefore take it home to thee, and know it for thy self. Art thou troubled with a hard heart, and an unbelieving soul, and art even wearied and tyred out with thy many sins and infirmities? Come thou with comfort unto this holy Communion, for thou shalt be sure to find saving good by it; to thee it shall be a spiritual medicine to heal all thy diseases, and to cure all thy strong and prevailing corruptions: and if thou come unto this holy Table of the Lord, it shall make thee as it is recorded of Saint *Lawrence*, able to suffer Martyrdom, and to get victory over all thy unruly affections, yea at last thou shalt tread Satan thy arch-enemy under thy feet. Therefore be not dismayed, for the Lord Jesus invites thee to come. What if thy infirmities be many? yet the mercies

of

of God, which he tenders to thee in this Communion are many more. *Samson* who was the ſtrongeſt Soldier and Companion in his time that was in *Iſrael* to overcome the Philiſtines, he yet began his ſtrength in weakneſs, being at the firſt overcome by a woman: So though the Lord intend to make thee a ſtrong Chriſtian, he will make thee to begin in weakneſs to perfect thy power; to begin in ſin and miſery, that he may make thee to end in glory: I know Gods children here may receive temporal puniſhments, and bring temporal ſcourges upon themſelves, as we may ſee among the Corinthians here, but it ſhall be for their good and amendment; namely, for their correction, and not for their ruine and deſtruction; that ſo being chaſtned by the Lord, they might not be condemned with the world. Therefore if thou comeſt careleſly and unprofitably, God will chaſtiſe thee with the rods of men, as he did *Peter*, who receiving the Sacrament with his Maſter over night, yet the next day thrice denyed him; but God whipt his ſoul, and ſcourged his conſcience for it, and beat him black and blew, ſo that he *went out and wept bitterly*: nay he could ſcarce wipe off that ſin, and recover himſelf again whi'ſt he lived.

Wherefore let us take heed of unprepared coming to the Sacrament, for God will not hold ſuch guiltleſs: yea, if his own Sons or Daughters tranſgreſs thereby, he will make them to feel the ſmart of it.

But now to come to all ſuch as come month by month, hand over head, without any examination and repentance, in their uncleanneſs and abo-

abomination, making no conscience of their reformation, let me tell them that it shall be one of Christs demands of them in the day of Judgement. How oft hast thou been at my Table? How oft hast thou been partakers of that Holy Communion which I gave unto thee? Hast thou come preparedly, or received worthily, or no? Hast thou eat Bread at my Table with me, and lift up thy Heel against me? Did I command, and thou wouldst not obey? Did I send my Ministers to thee to reform thee, but thou wouldst not be reformed? Did I check and reprove thee for thy Pride, Blasphemies, Drunkenness, Covetousness, Anger, Wrath, Malice, Fornication, Hypocrisie, and Prophaness in the matter of Worship? and yet wouldst thou still live in these sins? Where are the sins that thou hast forsaken, and pleasing Corruptions that thou hast abhorred? What Grace and Holyness hast thou received by the means thou hast enjoyed, and how hast thou manifested the same through thy whole Conversation? Oh! woe, woe unto thee, yea a world of woe unto thee, and unto all such as shall be silent & speechless to those or the like demands of Christ; for they cannot say they have come out of their sins, and have been reformed by the means of Grace, and have received Spiritual Nourishment and Refreshing from the Heavenly Banquet of the Communion of the Body and Blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

A Man will especially regard the last words of a dear Friend, who is as a mans Soul, when he is to speak upon his death-bed, and will be careful

careful to remember them: and doſt thou not more regard the laſt Will and Teſtament of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt? We count it a horrible ſin to alter the laſt Will and Teſtament of a man that is dead. Beloved, the Lord Jeſus, before he left this World, inſtituted this bleſſed Sacrament as his laſt Will and Teſtament, and hath given us a charge, that as we would not eat and drink our own damnation by bringing the Guilt of his Body and Blood upon our Souls, ſo that we ſhould diſcern the Lords Body, and not come unpreparedly in our ſins and abominations, without reverence and reſpect to ſuch holy and high Myſteries, as if there were nothing more to be received and looked after, than the bare and naked Element of Bread and Wine, or as if we did come to communicate with unclean Devils. O my Brethren, if you had but Faith, you would be able to diſcern Chriſt in the Sacrament; and therefore when thou comeſt unto it, thou muſt prepare and ſanctifie thy ſelf to communicate with him in thoſe holy Ordinances and heavenly Myſteries of his moſt precious body and blood: for if ſo be that thou retaineſt thy ſins, and ſo come unworthily unto this holy Table of the Lord, thou art a great Covenant-breaker with God: For thou never comeſt unto the Communion, but thou makeſt and reneweſt thy covenant with God, wherein thou promiſeſt thus much or the like in effect.

Lord, I have been formerly a Drunkard, but now I promiſe to give it over, and never to be a drunkard more; I have been a ſcoffer at Religion, and a mocker and derider of thy Children, but

but now I faithfully promise, Lord, that I will never do so any more: I have been wicked and sinful, disobeying and rebelling against all thy Holy Commandments, and respected not thy Judgements and Promises, and have been careless of thy Glory; but now, Lord, as I eat this Bread, and drink this wine, so I covenant unto thee, and promise to thee, that I will amend all my sinful ways, and become a reformed Christian. And as I ever look that the body and the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ represented in the Elements, should nourish my Soul unto Eternal Life: so I promise to be disobedient unto the Devil, but faithful and obedient unto thee. I will stop my ears against the alluring inchantments of the World, and wicked suggestions of the Devil; but I will open them wide to hearken to thy Voice, that I may Obey thy Commands.

But now as thou hast made it, so if thou hast broken this thy Covenant with God, returning to thy former courses of sin and disobedience against him, know thou, that this Covenant of thine which thou hast broken, shall stand in full force against thee; for God will assuredly require it at thy hands; and all the Sacraments which thou hast received, thou hast received them but as so many Seals and Pledges of thy just deserved condemnation.

*Object.* But some Man may object and say, *Do all that come unworthily unto the Sacrament, eat and drink their own Damnation? then many hundreds, yea thousands be damned. Are all damned that have eat and drunk unworthily?*

*Answ.*

*Anſ.* No, but a man may eat and drink his own damnation three ways: Firſt, *In regard of guilt and liableneſs unto Gods Wrath*: and ſo he that eateth and drinketh his natural food, his dinner, ſupper, or breakfaſt in his ſins, eateth and drinketh his own Damnation; yea, whoſoever thou art, that cometh unto this holy banquet in thy ſins, in thy pride, choler, malice, wrath, or vengeange, covetouſneſs, hypocriſie, and deadneſs in Gods ſervice, thou never eateſt a bit of bread, but thou eateſt and drinkeſt thine own damnation; that is, thou eateſt and drinkeſt that which will witneſs againſt thee another day, *Deut.* 28. 16, 17, 18, 19. &c. *If thou wilt not hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, to obſerve and do all his Commandments, then all theſe curſes ſhall come upon thee and overtake thee: Curſed ſhalt thou be in the City, and curſed in the Field, curſed ſhall be thy basket and thy ſtore.* Now if thy bread be curſed, then thou alſo art curſed that eateſt it. *Anſwer.*

Secondly, *In regard of the Seal and Obligation in the Conſcience*; ſo he that eateth and drinketh the Sacrament in his ſins, eateth and drinketh his own damnation; that is, he eats and drinks that which ſeals up his damnation againſt the great day of account. And thus, many amongſt us, and I fear the moſt part of this Congregation, have eat and drunk their own damnation. But this Seal may be broken off, and God grant it may.

Thirdly, *In regard of Sigillation in Heaven*; and ſo he that eats and drinks unworthily, and will not be reformed, he that receives the Sacrament time after time, yet ſtill retains his ſins, and will

will not be humbled for them, nor forsake them, he setteth a seal in heaven upon his own Damnation, that all the whole world can never break off, but such a one most certainly, is a damned creature.

And now (my brethren) God forbid there should be any such here, but that this Seal may be broken off: And Oh that God would put some strength into this word, that it may be broken off by your godly sorrow for your sin, and forsaking of them all: for if this seal be set on your damnation, why do I yet speak unto you, and intreat and beseech you in the Name of Christ to come home and be reconciled to him? And I desire to stand here, as *Jehojadah* set Porters at the Gates of the City, and of the House of the Lord, to keep off all those that come in their uncleanness, 2 *Chron.* 23. 19. So I stand this day as the Porter of the Lord, to keep the Lords watch, that no prophane wretch, no proud-hearted sinner, that means not to enter into a new course of Life, that no such one come unto this holy Communion; I charge you as you will answer the guilt of Christs Blood before Gods Throne, that you meddle not with it. But now if there should be any that would absent himself, because he will the more freely go on in his sins, let him know that such a one excludes himself from the benefits and merits of Christs Death, & shall never have the benefit of a Redeemer at the day of judgement, but shall perish in his sins for his careless neglect and fearful contempt of so effectual and powerful means of Salvation and purging, as is the blood of Christ, truly and really

ly

ly offered in the Sacrament. Wherefore if thou comeſt or comeſt not, woe is thee, if ſo be thou liveſt and continueſt in thy ſins, and goeſt on in thy unholy courſes.

And now to conclude; as the Cerubim ſtood before Paradiſe with a naked Sword to keep *Adam* out, that he might not enter and ſo eat of the tree of life: ſo I bring with me the Sword of God, to run it up to the hilt in the heart and bowels of every ungodly man, every rebellious and impenitent ſinner this day, that dares preſume to ruſh upon this holy Ordinance of God, with a polluted and unclean heart. Therefore let me exhort thee, that as thou tendreſt the eternal good of thy ſoul, ſo thou be careful not to eat the Body of Chriſt, nor drink his Blood in thy ſins, leſt thou eat thine own bane, and drink thine own curſe. Nay, ſo doing, thy miſery will be ſo great, as a good man well weighing and conſidering of it, ſaid, I profeſs, I had rather have all my veins cut open, and my blood ſpilt on the ground, than deliver the body and blood of Chriſt unto a prophane ſinner: for why ſhould I deliver his own bane and deſtruction unto him? But now (my brethren and beloved) come out of your ſins, come and welcome, if you part with your luſts, & ſo come, you ſhall be ſure to have his blood to waſh your heart, and cleanſe you, his righteouſneſs to clear you, and cloath you, his graces to ſtrengthen you, his ſpirit to heal and to ſanctifie your hearts and natures, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt to ſupply all good that is wanting in you. But if yet notwithſtanding all this that hath been ſaid, you will go on in your ſins, and

live

live as you did in your swearing, whoring, lying and drinking, and all manner of filthiness; and as you came unto it unclean, so you depart away from it more unclean, and never make any conscience of any reformation, I pronounce this day before God and his elect Angels, that thou shalt surely perish, and thy soul and body be damned and tormented in the scorching flames of hell for evermore. Therefore hearken unto instruction, and give ear unto counsel, now whilst that the Lord offers it to you, that so you may not harden your hearts any more, but may hear and obey, that your souls may live, and so coming together to this holy and blessed Communion for the better and not for the worse, you may return home with the blessing of Children.

The

# The Duty of Communicants,

## *Or*, Examination required in every Communicant.

A SERMON preached by Mr. *WILLIAM FENNER*, Minister of Gods Word.

2 Cor. 11. 28.

*But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup.*

IN the latter part of this Chapter the Apostle treats of the Sacrament of the Lords Supper: And first he reproves the *Corinthians* for their unworthy coming to it, as we may see in ver. 18. There were Errors and Schisms contempt of the poor, drunkenness, excess, disorder, and unprofitableness in the Duties of God: they waxed worse and worse by the Sacrament. All these, and sundry other abuses were among them; so that they did not eat the Lords Supper aright as they ought.

Secondly, *He reduceth them back to the first prime institution of it by Jesus Christ*, as we see in verse 23 that hereby they might both see how grievously they had abused the Sacrament, and likewise see how they might sanctifiedly use it.

Thirdly, he shews the danger of *unworthy Receivers*, and this he sets out two ways.

First, *by the grievousness of the sin*; such a person makes himself guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, as we see, verse, 27.

Secondly, *by the woeful consequence that follows* upon it; *He eats and drinks damnation to himself*, as we see, verse 29.

The sum of the text.

Now in this verse (that I may not trouble you with speaking of any more matter than what is necessary for the present Theam) he shews, *how we may prevent, escape, and avoid this danger*; how we may take an order that we do not fall into this grievous sin, that we do not plunge our selves into this grievous misery: *Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.* A man must examine himself, sift his own soul and labour to prepare himself before he dare to venture on this sacred business. In these words before we set upon the particular handling of them, we may observe, that;

*Obser.* 1. We must not rush upon the sacrament.

*We must not rush upon the Sacrament.*

There must somewhat be done before we receive it, *Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup.* There are none of the Ordinances of God, that a man may safely rush upon. Wouldest thou offer any Sacrifice to God? but thou must stay first, and

examine

examine thy ſelf, whether there be not ſomething yet undone: It may be thou haſt offended God in ſomething or other; It may be thou art out with thy brother; thou muſt go firſt and be reconciled to thy brother, and then offer thy Gift, *Mat.* 5. So, wouldeſt thou reprove thy neighbour? It may be there is ſomewhat out of order, ſome indiſpoſedneſs in thee, thou art not yet in caſe to ſet on this duty; It may be thou art faulty and guilty thy ſelf; it may be thou haſt a beam in thine own eye. *Firſt* (ſaith the Text) *pull the beam out of thine own Eye, and then thou mayeſt ſee clearly to pull the moat out of thy brothers Eye*, Mat. 7. 5. So, wouldſt thou reform thy outward man? but it may be thy inward man is not reformed; there is ſome luſt in thy heart, ſome pride in thy will, ſome ſtubbornneſs in thy ſpirit, ſome Idol in thy boſom; *Firſt, cleanſe the inſide of the Platter*, Mat. 23. 26. There is never an Ordinance of God that can be done, but there muſt ſomewhat be done firſt, a man muſt do ſomething before: As in the choice of Officers, as miniſters, or Deacons, other Officers in the Church; firſt, they muſt be proved before they be choſen; ſo in all the Ordinances of God, Would we come to the Sacrament? There is ſomewhat muſt be done firſt, we muſt examine our ſelves, and root out all unſanctifiedneſs, and indiſpoſition, that cannot ſtand with the right Communicating in the Lords Supper. And ſo in every other good duty.

*The Reasons of this are;*

*Reas.* 1. Naturally we are not invited Guests.

First, *because naturally we are not invited Guests*, we are not such as are invited to the Lords Supper; we are children of wrath, and as long as we are in such an estate, we cannot come aright to the Communion. This is Children's Bread, and it cannot be given to Dogs. Christ whensoever he sets his dainties before his People, he tells us for whom they are, *Take, eat, this is my Body that is broken for you.* This is the Supper that is made for you, as it is in this Chapter, verse 24. First we must prove our selves invited Guests.

It is true, the Lord Christ invites every man to the Lords Supper; but he invites him methodically, he must be in such an estate: but every man is not so fitted: A man must be a member of Christ, that means to partake of Christs Death; he must be one that is in Christ, he must be able to prove that he is *ingraffed* into Christ, he must be able to shew the Mark of the Lord Christ on him: As it is with some of your great dinners, and feasts in this City, you have Tickets, and all that are admitted to the feast, must shew their Ticket before they are admitted; So thou must be able to shew thy *ticket*, that thou hast an invitation from Christ, thou must have a *mark*, and *token* from Christ that thou comest, and commest with his warrant.

*Simile.*

*Reas.* 2. We are indisposed.

A second reason is, *Though thou be invited, it may be thou art not disposed.* If a man will do a thing that he is naturally indisposed to, there must be somewhat done before of necessity. So the Lords Supper is a thing that naturally we are indisposed

disposed unto, therefore somewhat must of necessity be done first. Naturally we are unholy, we are unthankful, & carnal, we are in our sins, strangers from God, and the covenant of God, and from the seal of the covenant: all this indisposition must be wrought out before we can comfortably come hither. If Christ would have the very *Chamber* first trimmed, before he instituted the Passeover and the Sacrament; much more will he have the *Soul* disposed for him, and the heart cleansed from all filthiness. If he that was of the Peace-offering being indisposed, having his uncleanness upon him, was to be cut off from his people, *Lev.* 7. 20. what will God do to such people as come hither in their uncleanness, and indisposition, unsanctified, and unqualified.

*Reas.* 3. Solemn preparations required to the Sacrament.

Thirdly, *Suppose we were both invited and disposed, yet this is not enough: This is a solemn Ordinance of God, and an ordinary disposition will not serve the turn.* Though every Child of God be ordinarily disposed to every good Word and Work, to pray, and to hear the word of God, he is prepared and furnished to every well-doing, ordinarily and habitually? but a man must be disposed further: There is a solemn preparation required to the Communion, as in *Deut.* 16. 15. there were *Solemn Feasts* in the Law: so there is this *Solemn Feast* in the Gospel, and there are *Solemn Preparations* required thereto. When we come to the Communion, to eat the Lords Supper, it is not eating and drinking in Christs presence; for so may any reprobate do, and yet Christ may say to him, Depart from me thou worker of iniquity.

it is not to come and sit in your Pews, and wait till the Bread comes, and take it; and till the Cup comes, and drink it; so many a reprobate may do, and the Corinthians did, that did eat and drink their own damnation: But there must be a solemn preparation for it, *to be sealed with the Spirit of promise*, to be righteous by faith in the body and blood of Christ; for a man to be humble and empty of his sin, to be thirsty after the precious blood of Christ, to be fed and built up in the promises: It is a weighty thing to come to the Communion; a man must be a worthy man, or else he hath nothing to do here: As *Solomon* said of *Adonijah*; *If he be a worthy man, not a Hair shall fall from his head; but if wickedness be found in him, he shal dye.* 1 Kings 1. 25. if we be worthy men and women, not a hair of our head shall fall to the ground, none of the curses shall light on us, that light on unprepared persons; but if wickedness be found in us, if we be guilty of any sin, if we live in any lust not mortified, if there be any prophaneness in our lives, in our families, in our course, and calling, though we catch hold of the horns of the Altar, though we partake of these holy mysteries, yet we shall be so far from having any mercy, as that we shall hasten our own ruine, we set a seal on our own judgement, and make our case worse than it was before.

*Use.* To take heed of rash performance of duties.

*Let us take notice of it, and never dare to rush on any of Gods Ordinances.* You know what became of the foolish man in the Gospel, that when they were invited to come to the Marriage Supper, he thought it was nothing but to come with them

them that came, to croud in wit them, and sit down among the rest; he considered not what he went about, that he might be prepared accordingly; the event was this, he was cast out into utter darkness, *Mat.* 22. 13. It is dangerous rushing on any of Gods Ordinances. To rush upon Prayer, for a man to fall down upon his knees, and to utter any thing before the Lord hastily with his mouth, not considering that God is in heaven, and he on the earth. A mans word may damn his own soul, and pull vengeance on his own pate, his prayers may prove a curse, his prayer for mercy may be turned into vengeance: So the higher the service, the greater the danger. As the Servants of *Abigal* said to her, 2 *Sam.* 15. 17. *Consider what you do.* when evil was determined against them: so consider what you do when you come to the Sacrament, you come to a weighty thing, to that that will either set you nearer to the Kingdom of God, or Hell and condemnation. But I let this pass, and come to the words themselves.

*Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup.*

In these words observe:

First, the *matter of the Duty commanded*; that is, to eat of *that Bread*, and drink of *that Cup*. parts of the text.

Secondly, the *manner of doing the duty*, not only to eat of that bread, but *so* to eat; and not only to drink of that cup, but *so* to drink.

Thirdly, *The rule of direction how to come in a right manner to partake of it*; that is, by Examining our selves: *Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that Bread and drink of that Cup.*

Fourthly and lastly, *The benefit following that direction*, and that is in this word *But*; *But let a man examine himself.* He had said before, *He that eats and drinks unworthily, is made guilty of the body and blood of the Lord*; and, *he discerneth not the Lords body*, verse 27. *But*, saith he, as if he should say, if a man would prevent this, if a man would take order that he be not guilty of the body and blood of Christ, that he do not come undiscerningly to these heavenly mysteries, but with comfort, and title to the promises, with hope and confidence, and speeding there of the benefits of Christ exhibited, then, *let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.*

Necessity of receiving the Lords Supper.

Now I will pass over some of these points, namely, that we are to eat that bread, and drink that Cup. *There is a necessity that we should receive the Lords Supper.* I need not stand on this, you know it sufficiently proved by the Sacrament of the Law, which was the fore-runner of this Sacrament, that soul that did not partake of that, was to dye the death, was to be cut off from Gods People, *Num.* 9. 13. If the Lord was so careful of those Sacraments that were inferior to these, (& yet they were of the same substance as these) that the man that neglected to come to them, to partake of them, was to be *cut off*, to be *excommunicated* from the people of God, and to be rent off from the Congregation of the Saints: then how much

more

more for these heavenly, and weighty, and glorious Ordinances of the Gospel, which are far more glorious than them of the Law? But I will not stand upon that.

The Lords Supper to be received often.

I might here take notice too of the *Frequency* of the duty: for so it hath dependence on those words formerly, *As oft as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye shew the Lords death*: and so, that is, as oft as ye eat, do it in this manner. This is the command of God, that we oft receive the Lord's Supper. In the *primitive* times, St. *Basil* observes, that they eat it three or four times in a week, on Wednesdays, Fridays, and on the Lords Day; but that was a time of persecution, I will not stand upon that; I think it not needful. But it should be often, we should not thrust it only upon *Easter* and *Whitsuntide*, and *Christ-tide*, three or four times in a year.

Again, I might observe here from this mystery received, in that he calls it *Bread*, I might observe against the Papists transubstantiation, that the bread received is *not transubstantiated*, but is bread still, & against that of receiving in one kind. *So let him eat of that bread, & drink of that cup*: he doth not say, so let him eat of that bread only, but he directs the command in both kinds. But I let this pass, and come to the second thing, that is, the *manner how we should do this duty*.

*So let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.*

*Observ.* The manner of performance of duties to be regarded.

It is not, first let him examine himself, & then let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup: But, let him *examine* himself, and then, *SO*, let him eat: implying, that *examining a mans self helps or ought to help a Man to a right Manner*

and

and when he hath gotten a right manner, then to eat that bread, and drink that cup; that he may do, not only for matter, that which the Lord commands, but, for manner, as the Lord commands. Beloved, the Lord stands on circumstances as well as on duties. We are all Racers, we run, but we must *so run that we may obtain*, 2 Cor. 9. 26. So pray that we may speed, so hear that we may be converted, so reprove that we may be edified; so behave our selves in our places and callings, that we may glorifie God. It is not enough for a man to run, but he must *so run*, if he mean to obtain. Every man will be speaking and doing good things; but *so speak*, and *so do*, Jam. 2. 12. The Lord calls upon us to have a care of the *manner* of duties, as well as the *matter* of duties. It is not enough that a man come to eat of that bread, and drink of that cup, but *so* to eat, and *so* to drink of it, he must partake of the Lords Table, and so as the Lord enjoyns.

*Reas.* 1. The Lord commands the manner as well as the matter.

Now the *Reasons* of this are:

First, because the same Lord that commands the *matter*, commands the *manner* too. The Lord will have his service well done, as well as done, he will have the work well performed, as well as performed. It is not only the thing that the Lord stands upon, but the right manner and kind of doing it.

When *David* perswaded his Son *Solomon* to worship the God of his Father, he bids him not only do the thing, but to do it in a right manner: *And thou my Son* Solomon, *know thou the God of thy Fathers, and serve him.* Is that all? No, but, *with a perfect heart, and a willing mind,*

2 *Chron.*

2 *Chron.* 29. 9. He commands him to do it, not only for the matter of it, but in the right manner of it. A man may serve God, but if it be not with a perfect heart, and a willing mind, and with a chearful spirit; if he be not ready to every command, if he do not open his Ears to every rebuke, a man doth not serve God at all. The Manner either makes all, or marres all.

Secondly, Another Reason is, because *Circumstances overthrow Actions, if they be not rightly and duly observed.* As for Example: In Scripture, Prayer is an Action commanded of God: the Lord commands us to pray, that we call upon his name duly, every day, in all our needs and necessities, upon all occasions continually. But now if we pray not aright, not in that manner that the Lord hath prescribed; if we pray either with a guilty, defiled Conscience, with cold Affection, with a dead Spirit, or without departing from iniquity, or without a pure heart: if a man pray without the right manner of prayer, he marres all his prayer, it is a howling, and not a prayer. *They did not cry to me* (saith God) *when they howled on their beds*, that is, when they prayed, because they did not pray in a right manner, the Lord calls it *howling*, and not a *Prayer*. *We roar as Bears*, in *Isa.* 59. 12. The Prophet nick-names it, speaking in the person of the people, he calls it the *roaring of Bears*: The Lord had as lief hear the barking of a Dog, or the grunting of a Swine, as a man that doth not pray aright, with a bleeding heart, with contrition of soul and spirit, with a spirit of grace and

*Reas.* 2. Circumstances overthrow Actions, as in prayer.

*and supplication.* When a man prays, and prays not aright, his prayer leives that name, it is no more a prayer in Gods account.

2 Preaching. And so preaching, it is an admirable action: but if a man do not preach aright, if it be *flattering with the enticing words of mans wisdom, or beating the ayr*, and to shew his own Learning, this overthrows the action of preaching, he preacheth not Christ, but himself; himself, not the Gospel, though the Gospel be in his Sermon all over, yet himself he preacheth, the Action is marred, the Circumstances do marre it.

3 Receiving the Sacrament. So in the *Lords Supper*, if a man come not prepared, that he have not the *Wedding Garment*, that he be not aright qualified accordi g to the requisites of the Gospel, this is not to eat the Lords Supper. Saith the Apostle, *When ye come together, this is not to eat the Lords Supper*: you think you eat the Lords Supper, you take the bread and the cup, and can say, Blessed be God, and I pray God to bless me: you may come and do these actions, but the action is altered, the action is diversified when it is not done in a right manner.

4. Brotherly reproof. So if a man come to *reprove his brother*, if he himself be faulty, do you think this is sufficient reproof? No, it is hypocrisie. *Thou Hypocrite, Math.* 7. 5. his reproof of his brother is hypocrisie.

So, for men to tell one another of their faults, and to tell them with a spirit of bitterness; this is not christian dehortation, but *biting one another, Gal.* 5. 15.

And

And so for *eating and drinking*, beloved, eating is lawful, and drinking is lawful, and marrying and giving in marriage, all these are lawful, yet if a man eat not *aright*, and drink not *aright*, and *marry not in the Lord*, and eat and drink *without title to the Lords Creatures*, that he have not interest in the Covenant of God, if Christ be not in it, how shall he have comfort? nay, that very nature of his eating is altered, his eating and drinking, and marrying is a sin. As our Lord Christ shews of the old world; *They did eat and drink, and were marrying and giving in marriage, till* Noah *entred into the Ark, and the flood came and swept them away*, Mat. 24. 37. He reckons their eating and drinking among their sins, among the reasons and causes why the flood came upon them, they did eat and drink, and marry and give in marriage.

Eating and drinking.

You will say, *Was that the reason the flood came? And was that an argument of their security? Did not* Noah *eat and drink and marry? And were not his Sons married that were in the Ark, and he a Grandfather?* Object.

But, he did it aright, therefore his eating and drinking is not brought in as a sign of security, but of the old world, that were carnal and wretched people; it was, because they did not eat and drink *aright*. Answer.

There be rules in eating and drinking, in talking and discoursing, in doing the duties of our callings: There be rules how you ought to buy and sell, and to do every good word and work. If these Rules be not observed, the Rules of God's blessed word, the actions themselves are altered; though

though the things be commanded of God, yet they are curſed and abominable things, when the true form and faſhion of them is not regarded, though they be never ſo Godly.

*Simile.* A Garment, though it be never ſo good, if the Taylor handle it not well, it is marred in the making, if he bring it not to a right form, and make in a right manner, the man that is to have the Garment, is diſappointed. So Timber, though it be never ſo excellent, though it be all Oak, or Elm, or whatſoever tree, though it be never ſo fit for building, if the Artificer deal not well in the handling it, the inhabitant that comes there may curſe the day that ever he came there: If it be not well built, it may fall on his head and kill him, and all that belong to him. So it is in all the Ordinances of God, and the matters of Religion, we muſt not only do them for matter, but for manner too: for that either makes or marres them.

*Reaſ. 3.* The right manner of doing duties gets the Bleſſing. Thirdly, Another Reaſon is, *becauſe only the right Manner of doing Duties gets the Bleſſing.* A man may pray a thouſand times and never be heard, he may hear a million of Sermons, and never be converted, a man may come to all the Sacraments in the year, all his life long, and never be ſealed againſt the day of redemption. A man may do the things, and never get the bleſſing: all the bleſſing lyes in the right manner of doing. *Bleſſed is that Servant, whom, when his maſter comes, he ſhall find ſo doing*, Mat. 24. 48. He ſaith not, whom when his maſter cometh, he ſhall find doing. Chriſt when he comes to judgement, ſhall find many doing; it may be he will come in prayer-time,

time. it may be he will come in the morning, when many thouſands ſhall be at their prayers in their Families: it may be he will come at night when all be at prayer in their houſes; it may be he will come on the Sabbath, when all the country is at Church, hearing of Sermons, he ſhall find many thouſands doing and praying. But bleſſed is that ſervant, whom the Lord when he comes, ſhall find ſo praying, ſo hearing, ſo receiving the Sacrament. He ſhall find many believing, but ſo believing gets the bleſſing; many profeſſing but it is ſo profeſſing that gets the comfort, I ſay, all the bleſſings of God are promiſed to the right manner of doing. Now, what is it, when we do duties, what we do look for? Is it not for a bleſſing? why do we do the duties, if we do not do them ſo as we may get a bleſſing? Now, except we obſerve the right manner of doing them, all is to no purpoſe.

Reaſ. 4 Chriſt Example.

Fourthly, anot er reaſon is, *The Example of Jeſus Chriſt*: Chriſt hath given us an Example that we ſhould do as he did: Now he did not only do that which his Father bad him do, for matter, but for manner, both in all the words he ſpake, and in all the deeds that he performed. For the words he ſpake; *As the Father hath ſaid unto me, e en ſo ſpeak I*, 1 John 12. And in *John* 14. 31. *As the Father hath given me commandment, even ſo do I*. Mark, he did not only obey his Father in the matter of his Command, but in the manner of it. And as Chriſt hath done thus, ſo all that are Chriſts, all the Servants of God in all ages, they have been very careful, eſpecially of the right manner of obeying God. As it is

ſaid

ſaid of *Noah*, *Gen.* 6. 22. *As the Lord commanded* Noah, *even ſo did he*; juſt as the Lord commanded him; he did not only make an Ark, but *ſo* he made all the Rooms: *ſo* he made it in the ſame form and figure, and in the ſame ſimilitude, juſt as the Lord ſet him down the pattern, *even ſo did he*. So the Lord ſets down the pattern of every good word and work, of all our prayers, and Sermons, and hearing, and conference, and keeping the Sabbath, and ſpeaking holily: all our actions have their pattern ſet down in the word of God. Now as we are to do the things, ſo we are to do them in the ſame manner, as the Lord commands, even ſo muſt we do.

*Reaſ.* 5. From Gods glorify.

Fifthly and laſtly, *except we do it in a right Manner, except we come to the duty, ſo we come to the right Manner, we can never glorifie God*; The glory of God lyes in the manner of doing of things. *So let your light ſhine before men, that they may ſee your good works, and glorifie your Father which is in heaven*, Math. 5. 16. Mark, the light muſt not ſhine only in our lives and converſations; but ſo, that the duty muſt be a means to the glorifying of God. Now the means muſt have its proportion, and likeneſs, and nature, and mold, and frame, from the nature of the *End*. Look how the *End* is that the duty looks unto, *ſo* muſt the frame and faſhion of the duty be: Now if the *End* of all our actions be, that God may be glorified, that muſt put a form and faſhion upon every duty, that it may be *ſo*, that he may have glory. Suppoſe a man pray every day in his family, and call all his Houſhold,

his

his ſervants, and wife, and children, and all under his Roof about him every morning and evening: he may diſhonour God by prayer every day on this faſhion: if a man pray coldly, and careleſly, for form and faſhion, without faith, and life, he makes all the ordinances of God vile, and all the works of God contemptible: His houſhold ſleeps, one ſnorts it may be; another is infinitely prophane, it may be; and though there be divers that would fain be quickned, and wakened, yet his prayer is ſo cold, there is no life, or heat, nor warmth in it, that God is exceedingly diſhonoured, and all are thereby rather worſe than better. So for a mans preaching, though it be never ſo good a duty, yet he muſt labour to preach *ſo*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks of his preaching and labour in the work of his Miniſtery, how he may edifie others, and ſave his own ſoul. *So fight I, not as one that beats the ayr*, but *ſo, as I may get the maſtery*. We muſt ſo preach, that we may attain the converſion of the people; or elſe we may rather do as *Hophny* and *Phineas*, the Sons of *Ely*, that made the Table of the Lord contemptible, and the Sacrifice of the Lord loathſom in the eyes of the people: ſo may we do with the Ordinance of God.

Take any duty of Religion, if it be not done aright, God hath no glory by it. Suppoſe thou wouldeſt reprove thy brother, and tell him of his fault, and check him for his backwardneſs, or omiſſion of ſome duty, and for the commiſſion of ſome ſin; if thou do it, do it with a ſpirit of compaſſion, and bowels of Jeſus Chriſt, with an humble heart, with a feeling and a pure

conscience; I say thou getteſt a blot to thy own ſelf, and cauſeſt God to be ill ſpoken of, and the very way of his Name to be diſhonoured: This will be the effect of it, and ſo in every other duty. And ſo I come to the Uſe.

*Uſe I.* To reprove thoſe that hardly do Duties, without looking to the manner.

Is it ſo, that we muſt not only come to the Sacrament, but come aright; or do any Duty, but we muſt do it in a right manner? *This ſerves to condemn that natural Popery, that is in mens hearts, that is, of the Opus operatum, of the deed done.* This is the Religion of the Church of *Rome*, that ſo man do the duty (indeed it is better if it be done in a right manner, but) if it be done, there is ſomewhat a man may look for by that. If a man come to the Sacrament, the very eating of the Hoſt, the very partaking of the Body of Chriſt, they make it *meritorious*: So the very hearing of ſo many Sermons, the very ſaying of ſo many Prayers, the very performance of ſo many Duties, the very thing it ſelf, nakedly conſidered, it is of ſome validity. This is rooted in the hearts of men, we ſee it up and down, People do the Duty, and think all is well enough, when they conſider not how it is done. People pray, but not with Zeal; they hear, but not with reverence. People come to the Sacrament, not *for the better, but for the worſe*, they come not in *a right manner*; and yet every one hopes to ſpeed, and builds himſelf on this, that God accepts of him. But this is the folly of mens hearts; it is an evident argument that men go fooliſhly to work in the ways of God. It is the brand of a Fool not to be able to *obſerve Circumſtances*. *Ariſtotle* the Heathen, he ſaith,

ſaith, *It is the part of a wiſe man to think of, and underſtand the manner of Actions*: As a wiſe Man ſaith, he obſerves Circumſtances. It is the part of wiſdom to obſerve the right circumſtances of every action; as in *Epheſ.* 5. 15. *Walk circumſpectedly*, that is, *accurately*, as it is in the Original, *not as fools, but as wiſe*. Mark, he perſwades them to a right manner of walking; not only to walk in a good courſe, in praying, and hearing, in obedience and ſobriety, in temperance, faith, and diligence in our callings; but do it *accurately*, in a right manner; do it as wiſe men, and not as fools, who do it in a wrong manner. It is the part of a fool, I ſay, to do a thing, and to leave the right manner of doing it. Now this is nothing with God, the Lord doth not eſteem any action, though it be never ſo frequently done, except it be done with his own ſtamp, except it have his own Character upon it.

I remember a ſtory in 2 *Kings* 17. 26. The *Aſſyrians* there obſerved, that God ſent Lions among them, becauſe they did not obſerve the right manner of the God of Iſrael: they worſhipped the God of Iſrael; but becauſe they obſerved not the *right manner of his word*, he ſent Lions among them, to tear and devour them to pieces. So though we pray, and hear, and read, and profeſs, and have a name that we live; and though we be taken for good people, and heap up duties from day to day, and vie performances; and though we do them as many times as the Children of God; nay, though we could do them ten thouſand times oftner than they. if we do them not in a right manner, if w

not the manner of the God of heaven and earth, with humble hearts, and self-denying spirits, with holiness of affection, and with purity of heart: if a man do them not in a right manner, the Lord will tear him in pieces, and he shal have no deliverance for all that.

*Use 2.* The Reason why men regard the matter & not the manner of Duties.

Another Use shall be, *What may be the Reasons why people are so willing generally to do duties for the matter, and care not to do them in a right manner?* It will not be amiss a little to shew the mystery of this thing: for we see every man is willing to do duties, every man will be praying, and comming to Church, many reprobates, and God knows how many carnal hearts are in this Congregation, some Drunkards it may be, some Adulterers, some it may be that committed whoredom the last night, some that have been swearing even now, and deceiving in their shops, there are many carnal hearts: yet every man is willing to do duties, to hear, and to pray. Now what may be the reason that people are willing to do good duties, and yet are loath to come off with their carnal hearts? There are four reason.

*Reas.* 1. The matter of Duties easy.

The first is this, *Because the matter of the Duty is easy, but the Manner is difficult.* It is an easie matter to pray, to say, *Lord I have sinned against heaven, and against thee.* Lord, I have sworn, I have been a drunkard, I have disallowed the Sabboth, I have done this and that, I pray thee pardon and forgive me, and give me thy Grace; it is an easie matter to do this: It is easie for a man to come to Church, and mark what the minister saith, & follow him from point

to

to point, and it may be go over it to his Family. This is good, there are few that come thus far. And ſo it is eaſie to come to the Sacrament to take the Bread and the Cup, and to pray for a bleſſing, this is eaſie; but when a man comes, to a duty in a right manner, here is difficulty, when a man doth it with a *How? Take heed How you hear.* He doth not call upon people to hear, that is not the matter; there needs no great diligence for that: but, if you will conſider *How* you hear, take heed to that. Here muſt be a great deal of circumſpection; the ſoul muſt be marvellous painful, a man muſt offer violence to his own ſoul, a man muſt fight againſt his own will, a man muſt beat down his own ſpirit, he muſt crucifie his own thoughts, muſt mortifie his own mind, and beat down his own ſoul. It is a hard thing to do in a *right manner*, as the Lord commands, if we conſider how to do it. This is certain, fleſh and blood cannot abide to take pains; if it can ſerve God with eaſe, and pray with eaſe, that it will do; but for a man to *weep* before God, for a man to indict his heart before the Throne of Grace, to rend his bowels before his Maker, to tear the caul of his heart upon his knees, for a man to vow to God, and pay them; for a man to rid his hands of all the wages of iniquity, for a man to purifie himſelf as Chriſt is pure, for a man to wraſtle with God, and to take grace according to the covenant of grace, with life and power, to do it in a *right manner*: here is religion, and *this* man cannot abide.

And ſo for the *Sacrament*, for a man to come in a *right manner*, Oh it is *difficult* to fleſh and

blood; for a man to go and *examine all his life*, to *reckon up all his converſation*, to *anatomize himſelf from his Cradle to this moment*; to *conſider* how he hath *ſinned* in his *calling*, in his *Family*, in his *Shop*, in his *Company*, in his *Speech*, and in his *Life*; to go and judge himſelf of theſe, and condemn himſelf, and to *accept of his own puniſhment*, to go and *wrack his own thoughts*, and *crucifie his own ſoul*. Oh! *this* is hard, men cannot abide this: therefore they go and take the *Matter*, they obſerve that, and leave out the *Manner*.

*Reaſ.* 2. The matter of duties may be done with a proud Heart.

Secondly, another reaſon is this, *Becauſe the matter of duties may be done with a proud heart*; there is no duty but a man may do it with a proud heart, and never be humble. A man may pray, and uſe good words, and make good petitions, and have marvellous good language, and Scripture phraſes, and terms, and paſſages, and an admirable ſweet tone, and yet have a proud heart. A man may come and preach a *Sermon*, he may preach ſo as that he may ſtrangely effect the hearts of the people, and may make all the people wonder and admire at the gracious words that come from his mouth, and yet have a proud heart.

A man may hear, and hear oft, and hear the beſt Preachers in the City, and delight in hearing, and yet have a proud heart. A man may *come to the Sacrament*, and ſit to ones thinking, as devoutly as any in the Church, and pray when the people pray, and give thanks when others give thanks, and have a kind of moral faith in the Covenant, and a moral application of the Promiſes,

Promiſes, and yet have a proud heart. It is the *manner* of doing duties that humbles the ſoul, as St. *Paul* ſaith, *Act.* 20. *You know in what manner I have been with you.* Why, what was the manner? *In all humility of mind*, ſaith he, being among the *Epheſians*, preaching to them in a right manner, leaving them the example of his own pattern, doing all this in a right manner, he did it in all humility of heart. It is the right *manner* of praying that *pulls down the Heart* before God. It is the right manner of hearing the word, that makes a man melt at it. It is the right manner of comming to the Sacrament, that makes a man *feel the comfort of God*, and the promiſes of the Goſpel, and to ſeek and find the admirable things contained in it. It is the right manner that makes a man walk lowly with his God.

Thirdly; another reaſon is, *becauſe the Matter may ſtand with an unholy life.* A man may do a duty for the matter of it, and yet be unholy. This is plain; how many thouſands are there that pray, and yet are vain, and covetous, and carnal? How many thouſands hear Sermons, and yet are unprofitable? *Ever hearing, and never come to the knowledge of the truth.* If they were injurious before, they are injurious ſtill? if they were couſners before, they are ſo ſtill; if they were drunkards before, they are ſo ſtill. A man may receive the Sacrament every month, and yet may have his luſts, and roll them as a ſweet morſel under his tongue: he might delight in his ſecret luſts, and go on in his deadneſs of his heart. It is the right manner of worſhipping God,

*Reaſ.* 3. The matter of duties may be done, and yet a man be unholy.

God, purgeth the Conſcience, and purifieth the heart, and makes a man that there is no room for his corruptions, as you may ſee, 1 *Theſſ.* 2. 10. *Ye your ſelves know* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *how holily and unblameably we walked among you.* He ſpeaks there of his manner of walking, and he ſaith to them, becauſe it was in a right manner, it was an *holy* manner; ſuch walking as excluded all unholineſs and prophaneneſs. Fleſh and blood cannot abide this. Men they love to pray and be proud, they love to hear Sermons, and to have their profit; they love to profeſs religion, and ſtill to carry their ſecret luſts in their boſoms. People love this alife, to *go up to* Gilgal *and tranſgreſs, to offer Sacrifice every new Moon, and every morning, and to find the labour of their hands*, this is right; but for a man to part with his iniquity, that is the thing that goes againſt the hair.

*Reaſ.* 4. The matter of duties bring not the croſs.

The laſt Reaſon is, *becauſe the matter of duties bring not the croſs upon a man.* A man may do all the duties of Religion, and never be perſecuted for it, a man may be as devout as the devouteſt man under Heaven, and yet no body hate him for it, except he be devout in a right manner, and worſhip God in a right manner. One man may reprove another that is wicked. A Drunkard may ſuffer a drunkards reproof, and be never the worſe: A whoremaſter may ſerve his queane ſo, he may call her ſo, and yet not be ſpighted, becauſe it is not right. It is the right doing of it that brings the croſs; as in 2 *Tim.* 2, 10. *Thou knoweſt my manner of life*: It was that that brought afflictions and perſecutions.

We

We may ſee to this very day many thouſands that ſeem devout men in the Church, they will pray, and will hardly miſs any time of prayer morning or evening; and yet they are far from being perſecuted: nay, many of them are main perſecuters of the Goſpel of God, enemies to the croſs of Chriſt, adverſaries to the Saints of God. We ſee it plain in *Act.* 15.5. we read there of *devout Women* that *raiſed perſecution* againſt *Paul.* Mark, they were *devout*, and becauſe it was *not in a right manner*, they perſecuted the Apoſtles, and ſet themſelves againſt them that were truly faithful. Though wicked men do not love to pray aright, yet many of them are much for praying, they care not how much praying they have, and when they are at prayers, they will pray over from the beginning of the Book to the end, they love it alife. But if they come to a *Prayer* that *moves the heart*, that *riſles the conſcience*, that *dogges a man into his Boſom*, that *lays a man flat on his face before God*, they gnaſh their teeth at ſuch a prayer. So they love *Preaching* too: I, it is true, if it be preaching that is haunting, and gloſing, *with the enticing words of mans wiſdom*: but if a man preach *to the conſcience*, if he preach the *pure naked word of God*, and carry it *home to mens ſouls*, this makes them gnaſh their very teeth, and they could eat the Miniſter of God for his labour. It is the right manner of duty that is accompanyed with the Croſs. Act 15. 5.

Thirdly. If we ought to be careful to perform Duties in a right manner, *Let us be exhorted in the fear of God, to go and quicken all our* *Uſe* 3. To labour to do duties aright.

*our Duties, to bring a Soul into ſo many Bodies?* we have bodies of praying, and bodies of hearing, and bodies of receiving the Sacrament, and of good duties, let us get a ſoul into them, labour to do them in a right Manner. The bare duty is like a Carcaſe. It is a Proverb of the Jews, *Prayer without preparation, it is as the Carcaſe without the Soul*: that is, a loathſome thing; ſo is prayer without life, and without a right manner of pouring it forth. Let us labour therefore in the fear of God, to pray, and pray aright, to hear, and to hear aright; to ſeek God, and to ſeek him with all our hearts, aright, and to do every thing in the right way.

Motives to perform duties in the right manner. 1. motive.

Let us conſider, First, *We do not partake of any Ordinance at all, except we do it in a right manner.*

I remember a fit place for this in *Numbers* 11. 14. It is ſaid there, *The ſtranger ſhall eat the Paſſeover, and partake of it according to the Ordinance and the manner of it.* Where the Text puts in the *Ordinance* of the paſſeover, and the *Manner of it.* For it is all one, they are *Synonima's*. So the ordinance in every duty, Gods *Ordinance* in praying, in hearing the word, in the Sacrament, in reproof, in every good duty, it is all one as the ſelf-ſame thing. So that if we pray, and do not pray in a right manner, we have not prayed, we do not partake of the Ordinance. So when we come to the Sacrament, the ordinance and the manner of it is all one; it is one compleat concrete action, we do not partake of it, except we partake of both.

Se-

Secondly, consider, *it is nothing but Hypocrisie, when a man prays, and doth not pray in a right manner*; When a man doth any duty to God, and not in right wise, it is nothing but hypocrisie: Mark how our Saviour Christ sets forth the hypocrisie of the Pharisee, *Luke* 18. 11. *The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself*; he marks his manner of prayer: he doth not say, *He stood and prayed this*, these words, but *Thus* he prayed, he did not pray in a right manner: there was his hypocrisie, and that was the reason he went home not justified. 2. Motive.

Thirdly, consider, *It makes the Ordinance of God of no effect. Thus they make the Commandments of God of none effect*, *Matth.* 15. 6. He speaks there of their duties that they did in a wrong manner, and their expounding the Scripture, that they did in a wrong wise; and their sacrifice, their offerings, and tithings, their precepts, and many things that were all done after another fashion than God had commanded; therefore saith Christ, *Thus, they make the commandments of God of none effect*. So we make all the duties of Gods worship of *none effect*. We know there is never an Ordinance of God, but it hath great effect if it be rightly performed. Prayer is of great effect, it is able to rend Heaven, it is able to pull down God to the Soul, it is able to wrastle out a Blessing, to quicken the Heart, to obtain of God every thing we want: but if a man pray not aright, a man may pray and go away never a whit the more holy, nor more quickned, nor neerer to heaven, nor comfort 3. Motive.

fort. So *Preaching and Hearing*, they are admirable Ordinances, what powerful effects have they wrought when they have been done in a right kind? People have cryed out and been converted at them; and many a man hath been pulled out of the power of Satan to the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. They had royal glorious effects upon many thousand Souls. But what is the reason that our hearing is so uneffectual? Because we hear not in a right manner, this makes the Ordinance of God of none effect, it makes Prayer of no effect, the Word of no effect, the Sacraments and Sabbaths of none effect; you see people partake of these things, and are never the wiser.

Lastly. *It cannot please God, it is only the right manner of doing Duties that pleaseth God,* as in 1 Thessalonians 4. 1. *As ye have received of us, How ye ought to walk, and to please God.* Mark, there is the Manner, *That ye may know HOW to walk,* and by that to please God. It is not enough for a Man to walk in Good Duties; that a man may do, and not please God: but (saith he) *ye have received the Manner HOW to walk and to please God*: It is the *manner How* that pleaseth God. A man may walk to Hell upon Heavens ground, he may go to hell in the Ways of God, it is possible. Suppose a man should go and take (if it were possible) all the surface of ground between this place and *York*, and lay it between this place and *Dover*, a man might go to *Dover* upon *York* ground. So many a man lays the Ordinances of God in hell way: he walks in the Way to Hell, and there he lays his pray-

*Simile.*

prayers, and there his hearing, and his good duties: he prays every day, and hears every day, and doth good duties every day, and yet *walks to Hell*, he goes to Hell on *Heavens* ground. The reaſon is, becauſe he doth the duty, and doth not obſerbe the manner how he doth it.

The third thing is, the Rule of direction, how we may come to the right Manner of receiving the Sacrament; that is, by preparing of a mans ſelf: and the preparation is here ſet down by the *ſpecification of it*; namely, in examining himſelf: *Let a man examine himſelf, and ſo let him eat of that bread, and drink of that Cup.*

The general ſcope of theſe words, and the Apoſtles meaning in them, is this: That

*Every man muſt prepare himſelf before he come to the Lords Table.*

*Obſer. 3.* Every man muſt prepare himſelf before he come to the Lords Table.

I cannot ſtand on this, I will only name it.

As in the Sacrament of the Paſſeover, there was preparation for the Paſſeover, In *Joh.* 19.14. it is ſaid of the Diſciples of Chriſt, that *they made ready the Paſſeover*. In *Mat.* 26. they made the *Lamb* ready, and the *room* ready, and *themſelves* ready, and the *Table* ready, and every thing ready. So in the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, wherein Chriſt is the true Paſcal Lamb, when we come to eat of him, we muſt make every thing ready, *faith* ready, and *repentance* ready, and *intereſt in the promiſe* ready, and *hunger and thirſt after theſe ſpiritual dainties* ready, every thing muſt be ready: or elſe, like a man that comes into the field to battle, that hath not gotten his ſword,

ſword, or his weapons ready, that is the way for himſelf to be killed: ſo it is when we come to the Communion, and have not all things ready, it is the way to be damned.

The *Reaſons* of this are;

*Reaſon.* It is Gods ordinance

First, *becauſe the Sacrament is an Ordinance of God*: Now all the Ordinances of God require preparation, they are all ſpiritual, and naturally a man is carnal, and therefore cannot be

*Simile.* prepared. As it is with wood, there is never a tree in the wood, but it is unprepared for building. Is there any tree in the wood of the faſhion of a Chimney, or of a Lintal, or a Door? It muſt firſt be prepared, as it is in *Prov.* 24.27. *Firſt prepare thy work without, and then build thine houſe.* So every ordinance is to build a man up in the fear of God, in the grace of God: and in religion. Now man is naturally unprepared for it; First, a man muſt fell his wood, and then cut it, & hew it even, and carve it, and plain it fit, and prepare it before he build: So a man muſt hew down his own heart, he muſt humble his own ſoul, and qualifie all within him, and ſo be ſanctified before he be fit.

As for example: In *Prayer*, a man muſt be *prepared* to prayer before he pray; he muſt prepare his heart, and then Gods ears will hearken to it. In *Pſal.* 10. 17. The Lord will have the heart prepared before he hear the prayer. So it is with the word of God, a man muſt be prepared before he hear it: As a man that preacheth muſt be prepared before he preach, as *Ezra* is ſaid to *prepare his heart*, *Ezra* 7. 10. *He prepared his heart to do the Law, and to teach it.* So

a

a Miniſter cannot preach, except he be prepared before-hand, with a Commiſſion from God: with preſerving knowledge; with a Coal from Gods Altar, with a ſpirit of wiſdom and underſtanding, with a Law of kindneſs in his Lips, with Meditation, and with a theam fitted in his mouth for the People, he muſt be prepared with a burning and a ſhining light; or elſe he ſhall not edifie the Congregation: So it is with all other Ordinances. For humbling of a Mans Soul, a man cannot humble his Heart, except he be prepared to it, *Amos* 4. 12. *Prepare to meet thy God*, he ſpeaks of humiliation. If a man would humble himſelf before God, if he be not prepared, if his heart be not prepared to let go the world, his worldly profits, and vain pleaſures, and carnal acquaintance, his wonted luſts, and former delights. If he be not prepared to let theſe go, when he comes to keep a Faſt, or to afflict his ſoul, and goes along to do the duty, to lay himſelf down before Almighty God, ſome luſt or other will ſtick in his Teeth, and intercept his heart, he ſhall never be able to do it: As *Samuel* ſaid to the people, *If you will turn to the Lord, prepare your Hearts to do it*, 1 Sam. 7. So it muſt be in all the Ordinances of God, and much more in the Sacrament.

*Reaſ.* 2. Chriſt has made preparation for us in the Lords Supper.

Secondly, another Reaſon is, *Becauſe the Lord Chriſt hath made great Preparations to provide the Lords Supper*: therefore we muſt be prepared to eat it. You know what a great deal ado there was before the Supper was made. Chriſt muſt be incarnate, and fulfil all righte-

righteousnes, he must conclude it upon his suffering; he must *tread the wine-press alone*, and suffer himself to be beaten and rejected of God, and men, and suffer death, *the cursed death of the Cross*, all these things were concluded upon, before this holy and blessed Supper was provided. *Come* (saith he) *I have prepared my Dinner*, *Mat.* 22. Mark, Christ is fain to *prepare* his Dinner, he makes a great Feast: there was great preparation for it; so there must be great preparation of our Souls before we can come to this *holy* banquet. It is true among men, there may be great preparation for a Feast and little or nothing for the eating of it. Sometimes there are two or three days preparation for a Feast, and it is eaten presently. The reason is, because man naturally hungers after meat and drink, and he always provides twice or thrice in twenty four hours, for eating and drinking: But the Lords Supper is a *Spiritual* Banquet, a man is every day, and hour, and moment naturally unfit for it; and there is much ado to put an edge upon mens appetites, and a keenness upon mens desires, that they may be fitted and prepared for it.

*Reas.* 3. Christ looks for good entertainment.

Thirdly; Another reason is, *because the Lord Christ when he administers himself in this heavenly mystery, he offers to come into the Soul, and he looks for good entertainment*; and therefore of necessity there must be preparation for it. You see when a mortal man, an earthly Prince, or a Noble-man comes to another mans house, what a deal of preparation there is to provide for him; there is meat made ready, and pur-

purging the houſe, and ſweeping the yard, and trimming up the very Pales, and every thing, and making clean all the Chambers, and riding out whatſoever fills it, and every thing that is out of order is ſet in tune. And what will my *Lord* think? and what will his *Majeſty* think? he will think he is ſlighted and contemned. And when he comes in, it may be, his own Children ſhall ſerve, and his own Wife wait at the Table, and there is running up and down of errands, and a great deal of ado to give ſuch a one entertainment. There is preparation to entertain a man, as St. *Paul* ſaid to *Philemon*, *I will that thou prepare me a lodging*: how much more when the *eternal God* ſhall come under a mans Roof, and dine with him?

Laſtly, *Becauſe the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, is a part of Chriſts laſt Will and Teſtament.* Now it is a terrible thing when we know our Lords Will, and prepare not for the doing of it. Look in *Luke* 12. 48. He that knew it not, did things worthy of ſtripes; but in verſe 47. *That Servant that knew the Lords Will, and prepared not himſelf, neither did according to his will ſhall be beaten with many ſtripes,* that man ſhall be damned with much damnation: he ſhall be damned deeper than any body. Doſt thou know that the Lords Table, that this bleſſed Sacrament, is part of *Chriſts laſt Teſtament?* and wilt thou not prepare thy ſelf for it, to get an humble heart, and labour for a holy life, and ſeek for a thirſty ſoul, and vow upon new obedience, and enter into Covenant with the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, for a better kind of Converſation for the time to come?

*Reaſ.* 4. It is part of Chriſts laſt Teſtament.

come? Wilt thou not go and examine thine own Soul, and go and reform whatsoever is amiss in thy Family, in thy Place and Calling? Wilt thou not do these things to prepare for this Holy Will of Jesus Christ? Thou shalt be damned deeper than any body else, because this is a part of Gods last Will and Testament, and thou knowest it, and therefore woe unto thee if thou prepare not for it.

The

# The Duty of Reprovers and Perſons reproved.

A SERMON preached by Mr. *WILLIAM FENNER*, Miniſter of Gods Word.

Prov. 29. 1.

*He that being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, ſhall ſuddenly be deſtroyed, and that without Remedy.*

THeſe Words by reaſon of the Ambiguity in the *Hebrew* Tongue, do bear two Expoſitions, and our Engliſh can ſuffer but one.

The firſt Expoſition is this, *He that reproveth another, and hardneth his own neck, ſhall ſuddenly be deſtroyed, & that without remedy.* The other is as we have it tranſlated; *He that being often reproved, hardneth his neck, ſhall ſuddenly be deſtroyed, and that without remedy.*

I desire to speak of both these Expositions, for fear I should miss the true sense of this Text.

For the first, It is a truth of God every where confirmed in the Scriptures; *That he that reproves another, and yet hardneth his own heart, he doth but make a Rod for his own back, he pulls sudden destruction upon his own self.*

Then Secondly, there is no hinderance from the context, but that this may be the meaning of the Text: you know the *Proverbs* have little or no coherence, except two or three Chapters, indeed there is a coherence in them, but generally through the Proverbs there is none; so that if the Text it self will bear one exposition as well as another indifferently, the meaning none can tell, but only as it is hit.

Thirdly and lastly, the Text it self favours this Exposition: for so the word in the *Hebrew* is, *A man of reproofs, that hardens his own neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.*

Now the Question is, Whether the wise mans meaning here be of the actual reproof, the reproving of another, or of passive reproof, this is undetermined which of these is meant.

A man can have no light from the Coherence, none in the world; and from the Text it self, there is as much reason why we should expound it one way (even almost) as the other. So that I say, for fear I should let go the true meaning of the wise man. I desire to speak a little of the *Active* sense. *He that often reproveth another, and yet*

*yet hardneth his own neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.* From hence I may observe, That:

*A Reprover* (whether a Master, or a Minister, or a Magistrate, or a Father, or a private Christian, be he what he will be) *that reproveth another, and yet is guilty himself* (either in the same kind, or else in another, or in any kind) *and hardneth his own heart in it, that man shall suddenly be destroyed without remedy.*

*Obser.* 1. A guilty hardned reprover shall be destroyed.

Take a Preacher that preacheth strict doctrine to the People, that is very zealous against their sins, he is up with hell and damnation against their filthy courses: he preacheth for quickning, but himself is not quickned; he threatneth judgements against hardness of heart, and yet he hath a hard heart himself; this man pulls destruction upon his own pate. He is like the Pharisees, that imposed upon others grievous burdens and heavy to be born, but would not touch them with one of their fingers themselves, *Mat.* 23. 4.

The *Reason* of this is, because

*Reas.* 1. It is against his office.

First, *Such a Reprover of sin, does it against his Office*: The Office of a Reprover binds him to be blameless, as the Apostle speaks; *A Bishop must be blameless*, 1 Tim. 3. 2. Every Christian should be blameless; how much more Ministers, that bear the office of Reprovers? they should be blameless. Nay, if a man, though he take not the office of a Reprover, yet if he bear the person of a Reprover (as every private Christian must when God calls him to it; for every man may be called to reprove) though he have no authority over another, though he be a private

man, he may bear the perſon though not the office of a Reprover. Now a man muſt be unculpable, and unblameable himſelf, or elſe he ſins againſt his perſon. If a man reprove another for being carnal, himſelf muſt be ſpiritual, *Gal.* 6. 1. *If any man be overtaken in a fault, ye that are ſpiritual, reſtore him.* The reprover, the exhorter, and admoniſher muſt be ſpiritual, if he would draw another to be ſpiritual.

*Reaſ.* 2. He cannot reprove to a right end

Secondly, *Such a Reprover as is guilty himſelf in that kind, or in any other kind, he can never reprove to a right end. Why ſeeſt thou a Moat in thy brothers eye, and conſidereſt not the Beam in thine own eye? Mat.* 7. *verſe* 3. Why (ſaith he) to what end? what is that thou lookeſt at, thou art ſevere to eſpye faults in thy brothers eye? To what end doeſt thou reprove him? What is the Reaſon? What is the Thing thou wouldſt have, that thou findeſt fault with him? *Why ſeeſt thou a Moat in thy Brothers eye?* As if he ſhould ſay, thy *End can never be good*; it cannot be to do thy Brother good, for then thou wouldſt do thy ſelf good firſt: It is not becauſe thou hateſt ſin; for then thou wouldeſt deteſt thy own ſin. It cannot be out of a good principle, or to a good end. It is either becauſe thou art a buſie body in other mens matters, or thou art *cenſorious*, thou loveſt to be medling; or *becauſe thou hateſt thy brother*, and wouldeſt wreak thy malice on him; thou wouldeſt fain ſhame and diſgrace him, and by beating him down, get thy ſelf up; *or thou wouldeſt get a cover to thy own conſcience*; it muſt be ſome ſuch end, it cannot be a good end.

Chriſt

Christ puts it to a mans conscience, why he reproves his brother, when he is faulty himself?

Thirdly, another Reason is, *Such a Reprover can never do it in a right manner*, as Christ saith, Matthew 7. 4. *How wilt thou say to thy brother, let me pull the moat out of thine eye, when behold a beam is in thine own eye?* How wilt thou do it? In what fashion, or sort? How wilt thou be able to bring this about? A man that is a reprover, had need to have a very clear sight of his own, that sees another mans faults, and will set another to rights; he had need to have a good judgement, or see all the circumstances of reproof and rebuke, that deals with another. As long as a man hath a beam in his own eye, as long as he hath lusts in his own heart, that will blind his judgement, and darken and cover his eyes, and make him that he shall not be able to see to go about it. How canst thou possibly say to thy brother, let me pull the moat out of thine eye, when there is a beam in thine own eye? *Reas.* 3. Not in a right manner.

A man that is to reprove another, a Master that will reprove his Servant, or a Father his Children, or a minister that will reprove his People, or a Magistrate that will reprove those that are committed to his charge, or any brother that will reprove another, he must do it with a spirit of compassion, with bowels of pity, with a sense and feeling: there is a great deal of wisdom had discretion to be observed in this act. Now when a man hath a Beam in his own eye, how shall he be able to do it? That man that is faulty and guilty himself, ei-

ther he must reprove too harshly, and rigourously, or too sparingly, or too insultingly, he must do it in a wrong manner, it can never be sincerely and truly done, as long as a man hath a lust in his own heart, and he himself is guilty and faulty, that is a reprover of his brother. Nay, the party reproved, is holpen to retort on him, *How dost thou tell me of pride, and worldlingness, and covetousness? who is proud and covetous as thou?* Thus a man shall be ready to be hit in the teeth.

*Reas.* 4. It is hypocrisie.

Fourthly, *Such a reprover is an Hypocrite.* It is no Christian reproof for a man to do so. Wilt thou go and find fault with thy servant for his laziness in thy service, when thou art lazy in Gods service? Wilt thou find fault with thy brother for his pride, and thou art full of fashions? wilt thou condemn the sins of the times, and thou livest in some lust? This is nothing but hypocrisie. Thou makest as if thou didst stand so much for obedience to God; and oh! there is this and that sin against God, when thy self is a sinner in that, or in another kind; this is hypocrisie, as Christ saith here, *Thou hypocrite, first cast the beam out of thine own eye, and then thou shalt see clearly to cast the moat out of thy brothers eye. Thou hypocrite:* Mark, it is an act of hypocrisie when a man goes to find fault with another, before he has gone to redress his own soul; to purge his own conscience, and have shook hands with the wages of iniquity his own self, before a man have done this, it is hypocrisie to deal with another. For when a man reproves another, he takes a form upon himself of one that is zealous against

againſt ſin, and an enemy to all ſinful practiſes: Now what is this but hypocriſie, when a man hath not this in him that he preterds? when a man finds fault with anothers pride, as if he were humble forſooth, with an others worldlineſs, as if he were liberal; when a man doth ſo, he incurres the guilt of hypocriſie in reproving another.

Fifthly, another reaſon is, becauſe *ſuch a Reprover is inexcuſeable, his reproving of another mans ſin, makes him inexcuſeable for his own*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *Romans* 2. 1. *Therefore thou art inexcuſeable, O man, whoſoever thou art, that judgeſt: for wherein thou judgeſt another, thou condemneſt thy ſelf, for thou doeſt the ſame thing.* Mark, thy own mouth ſhall condemn thee; thou findeſt fault with another mans pride: it ſeem he is to be condemned for it, then God condemns thee for thy pride. Thy pride is a fair mark for Gods Juſtice, becauſe thou condemneſt another. Doſt thou find fault with anothers hardneſs of heart, and ill will, and backwardneſs to any thing that was good, and yet thou art backward? Thou expoſeſt thine own ſoul to the judgement of God; thou haſt taught (as it were) Almighty God how to condemn thee for thine own luſts and corruptions. *Reaſ.* 5. It makes inexcuſable

Again, ſixthly, another reaſon is this, *becauſe ſuch a Reprover is an abſurd perſon.* It is abſurd to reprove another, and be faulty ones ſelf, as it is, *Rom.* 2. 21. *Thou that teacheſt another, teacheſt thou not thy ſelf? Thou that preacheſt another ſhould not ſteal, doſt thou ſteal?* This is a ſtrange abſurd thing, this Reproof doth not ſound well in *Reaſ.* 6. It is abſurd.

in thy mouth: thou ſtealeſt, and forbiddeſt ſtealing; thou preacheſt againſt adultery, and committeſt it; thou ſpeakeſt againſt ſuch and ſuch ſins, thou findeſt fault with them in the Children of God, and art guilty thy ſelf, or in thy Children or Servants, or Neighbours, and art obnoxious to them in thine own practiſe: this is an abſurd thing: theſe rebukes and reproofs ſound not well in thy mouth.

*Reaſ.* 7. It is impudency.

Laſtly. It is a ſign of impudency, *Pſalm* 50. *What haſt thou to do to take my Covenant into thy mouth, when thou hateſt to be reformed, and haſt caſt my Covenant behind thy back?* And to the wicked God ſaith, What haſt thou to do to take my ſtatutes or Covenant, into thy mouth, ſince thou hateſt inſtruction? What haſt thou to do to reprove thy brother? If he be proud, what is that to thee, as long as thou art proud thy ſelf? thou goeſt and ſlingeſt ſtones at him, ſling them at thine own heart firſt. It is a ſign of impudency.

But, it may be objected; *Shall not a wicked Magiſtrate puniſh Sin, and a wicked Miniſter preach againſt the Corruptions of the Times, and a Wicked Maſter rebuke his Servants, and a wicked Father correct his Children? Becauſe he is wicked himſelf, ſhall he make himſelf more wicked, and contract more guilt upon his ſoul?*

I anſwer, that ſuch a man is in a dilemma; for the man is bound to reprove, in regard of his office, and yet he is bound in conſcience to go and amend himſelf firſt. I ſay, he is bound to reprove all thoſe that God calls him to reprove

prove, in regard of his office: but in regard of conſcience he is bound to go and amend his own fault firſt. Therefore if it be a Magiſtrate, ſuch as ſit upon life and death, or *niſi prius*, or any action between man and man: if he condemn a maleſactor, and there remember himſelf guilty, he is bound in conſcience to arise from the Bench, and go and amend his own ſin. And we that are Miniſters, when we preach to the people, and remember our ſelves guilty, let us lay our hands upon our mouths, at leaſt, *in votis*, before ever we have the face to go and find fault with the people, it is neceſſary it ſhould be ſo; Therefore, I ſay, a man is in a *dilemma*, if he do not reprove ſin, it is againſt his office, and the perſon he bears, when God calls him to it; and if he be reproved, then he ſins againſt the Command of God, that binds him to be blameleſs, that is to bear the place of a Reprover.

*Uſe* 1. The Uſe of this is, firſt, to let us ſee, that a *man that reproves* (I ſpeak not of Miniſters only, or of Magiſtrates, or Fathers, but of every man that reproves, either by tongue, in word, or in thought, if he find fault in his thought with another man for his ſins, and his ſtrange doings) *let him take heed he doth not pull a Judgement upon his own head*; he makes himſelf inexcuſable, as in *Rom.* 2. 3. the Apoſtle there ſpeaking of this very point; *Thinkeſt thou O man, that judgeſt him that doth theſe things, and doeſt them, that thou ſhalt eſcape the judgement of God?* A man that judgeth another, and doth the ſame things, that man certainly ſhall not eſcape the jude-

judgement of God, as his brother doth not escape his judgement.

*Use 2.* To be unblameable ere we reprove.

Secondly, another Use shall be for counsel to every man and woman (for it is every ones case) God hath called every one of us to reprove one another, Ministers to reprove the People, and Magistrates to judge between man and man, and every neighbour is to reprove when he is called thereto. Now let us mark and observe this rule, let every one of us labour with all care and conscience, to be unblameable, unoffensive, to humble our own souls, to cleanse our own consciences, that we may be able to perform this duty. Beloved, we wrong our own souls, if we find fault with others, and suffer our selves to be faulty.

When *Paul* was to preach to the People, knowing that his office of preaching required reproving, you see, lest he should wrong his own soul, how he laboured to be unblameable, saith he, *I beat my body down, when I preach to others, lest I become a cast-away.*

Again, as a man wrongs his own soul, so he dishonours God. It cannot be unknown what an unthankful office, the office of a reprover is; the world cannot abide reproof: *The wicked hate the Reprover in the Gate*, Isa. 29. 21. The world is full of scorners, that hate reproof, *Prov.* 15. 12. Though some men be not so wicked as to hate reproof, yet at least they think hardly of them that reprove; they think they usurp authority over them, and crow over them, or they undertake to be their betters; as a reprover undertakes in that thing to be a mans better. Now when

when a man is reproved, he is apt to think that his neighbour crows over him, and exerciseth authority upon him, as if he would grow on him, and be his Judge. You see *Lot*, when he reproved the *Sodomites*, though as gently as ever he could: *My brethren do not so wickedly*; presently for all that they thought hardly of him; *What, will this fellow be a Judge that came but the other day to sojourn?* Gen. 19. Presently they thought hardly of him. So we see the Prophet, he doth but find fault with *Amaziah* for his fault, and presently the Kings eyes are blinded, and his heart hardned, *Who made you of the Kings Counsel?* 2 *Chron.* 25. 15. He thought him a medler, that pried into state-affairs, and into the Court and Kingdom. A man cannot reprove his brother for his sin, but it is a thousand to one, if his brother be not ready presently to pry into him, and to look narrowly into his ways, to espy a hole in his Coat if he can, or to make one if he cannot: all mens eyes are upon him, and they look strictly and straitly, and if any thing in the world be amiss they will be sure to mark it, and to make more of it, to make mountains of mole-hills. When the blind-man did but find fault with the Pharisees, and reprove them a little for persecuting of Christ, What say they? *Art thou altogether conceived and born in sin, and wilt thou teach us?* John 9. 34. Presently they looked on his blindness, and birth; Certainly he is a viler sinner than other men, and shall he go find fault with them? If we mean to reprove another, let us labour to be unblameable, to be godly and holy, to reform our own ways, let us be sure to purge our own families,

families, to cleanse our owa souls, to rid our own hands of all the ways of sin and iniquity, lest God be dishonoured. The word of God will be flung in his own face back again, and the reproof, if it be never so sweet, and never so wise, it will be retorted in a mans own teeth, if he be not unblameable himself. And a Man had need to be humble, and lowly, and gentle, and meek, and to put on all bowels, and gentleness of heart, if he will reprove.

All sins are not to be reproved alike, some with sharpness, some with lenity. He is a Mountebank that will open a vein for every wheal and pimple. The Reprover is like them in *Isaiah*, when they deal with the Cummin and Fetches, a little rod will beat them out, but when they come to the Corn, Wheat, and Rye, they beat them down with the Cart-wheel. So when we meet with a hard-hearted spirit, we must use stronger corosives to them, and gentler admonitions and rebukes towards others that sin with a lesser and a weaker hand. But this is a thing that a man must be marvellous careful of that reproves. Nay, let a man be unblameable for the present, if he have been faulty before, if it were seven, or ten, or twenty years before, if it be known, it is a thousand to one, but he shall be hit in the teeth with it when he reproves: you committed adultery, and you did steal at such a time, if it were never so long ago. Therefore St. *Paul* would not consent to take *Mark* with him in the ministery, *Act.* 15. because he had been offensive to the Church before. We had need to be *marvelous careful* and wary if we *will reprove.*

*Simile.*

I had thought to have named other Uses, but I leave this exposition, and take it as it is passively interpreted.

•

*He that being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.*

THough it may be expounded the other way, yet I rather incline to this: the reason is; *Because this is the constant current of all interpreters generally.* I meet but with one or two that expound it the other way, but all passively, *He that being often reproved, hardeneth his neck,* &c. The second exposition.

Secondly, *Because the word in the Original* is, *A man of reproofs that hardeneth his own neck.* Now, though it be indifferent whether it be *Active* or *Passive*, yet look in the Scripture, and you shall find it more often *Passive* than *Active.* *A man of reproofs*, that is, a man often reproved, in the *Passive.* As in *Isa.* 53. 3. Christ is a man of sorrows, not making others sorry, but made sorry passively. And so in *Dan.* 9. 23. It is said *Daniel* was *a man of desires*, that is, not a man desiring other men, or other things, not *actively* desiring, but *passively*, desired, beloved of God exceedingly. So it is said of *Jeremiah*, *Jer.* 15. 10. he was *a man of strife*, not a man *striving* with others, but a man *striven with.* So in 1 *King.* 2. 26. *A man of death*, that is, not killing others, but to be killed himself. It is taken more frequently in the passive sense; and we may more boldly take it so. *A man of reproofs*, that is, *reproved again and again*, that hath received divers reproofs, and

and yet *hardneth his own neck, ſhall ſuddenly be deſtroyed, and that without remedy.* Here I might obſerve by the way, this point of Doctrine; That,

*Doctrine* The Lord doth not deſtroy men willingly.

*The Lord doth not deſtroy man willingly.*

He ſaith not, A man ſhall be deſtroyed without remedy; but a man when he hath ſinned againſt God, when he hath committed ſin, and not only ſo, but when he is reproved for his ſin, and goeth on. The Lord doth not deſtroy a man nakedly, but upon conſideration of ſin. *Willingly the Lord doth not afflict any*, Lament. 3. Mercy & puniſhment they flow from God, as the Honey and the ſting from the Bee; the Bee yieldeth honey of her own nature, but ſhe doth not ſting but when ſhe is provoked: ſo the Lord is gracious, and good, and favourable, and kind, and bleſſeth his people from his own nature, but he doth not puniſh, and plague, and deſtroy, but being provoked by ſin and iniquity. I will not ſtand to follow this point, I let it go.

God deſtroys not but for ſin. *Simile.*

The Text it ſelf contains the great mercy of God, in lending a man a reproof.

And what a great ſin it is, what a great ill it is for a man to ſin againſt his reproof. The *greatneſs* of the ill is ſet down two ways.

Firſt, *By the great ſinfulneſs of the thing*, it is called, *the hardning of a mans own neck.*

Secondly, *By the greatneſs of the puniſhment* that God inflicts upon this ſin, and that is, he will deſtroy him, and that without remedy.

*Obſerv.* A great mercy to be reproved

For the firſt, namely, what a great mercy it is for God to let a man be reproved for his ſins. It may be proved by many places of Scripture, only

only I find Scripture is brought as an aggravation of ſin when they ſinned againſt reproof, *Hoſ.* 5.2. ſaith he, *They are profound to commit ſin, though I have been a rebuker to them all.* As if he ſhould ſay, though I have been ſo merciful as to ſhew them the danger of ſin, to tell them what would come of their wretched courſes: though I have called them to repentance, and have given them warning what would be the iſſue of theſe things; yet for all this, for all my mercy, they have gone on in their ſins though I have reproved them. This *Though* is a word of aggravation, as we ſee in the ſpeech of *Daniel* to *Belſhazzar*; *Thou, O King, haſt not humbled thy ſelf though thou knoweſt this*: as if he had ſaid, though the Lord let thee know the puniſhments upon thy Father, and the plagues of *Nebuchadnezzar* thy Grand-father, though the Lord have let thee underſtand what it is for thee to exalt thy ſelf againſt him; yet thou art not humbled, he aggravates his ſin. So, this aggravates a mans ſin when he goes on, notwithſtanding he is reproved. The Reaſons are,

First, *becauſe when God reproves a man of ſin, the reproof primarily comes out of love*; therefore when he reproved *Laodicea*, and told her ſhe was luke-warm, and ſaid, *I would thou wert either hot or cold*: And ſince ſhe was neither, he would ſpue her out of his mouth; he tells her whence the reproof flowed; becauſe *I love*, I *reprove*: *As many as I love, I rebuke*, Rev. 3. 19. It is not out of ill will that I tell thee of thy luke-warmneſs, and threaten to ſpue thee out of my mouth; I tell thee theſe things that thou mayſt avoid that ill, I ſay, Gods reproofs flow primarily from love to men, whereby

*Reaſ.* 1. Reproofs come from love.

he would have them lay aside their wretched courſes, and avoid the judgements. Nay, it is an agreement of hatred when a man doth not reprove his brother of ſin. If God let a man go on in ſin, & never tell him of his drunkenneſs, nor never find fault with his pride and ſecurity, never convince him, or wound, or touch him, nor deal with him about his unſetled eſtate, and his rotten condition, it is a ſign God hates the man: but when God reproves a man from day to day, Man, thou art a proud creature, thou ſhalt to hell for thy pride, & hypocriſie, and ſecurity, and hardneſs of heart: When the Lord reproves a man from day to day, this is an argument of *love*; the other is an effect of *hatred*, not to reprove. *Thou ſhalt not hate thy brother in thy heart*, ſaith *Moſes*, *but ſhalt in any wiſe reprove him, and not ſuffer ſin to be upon him*, Lev. 19. 17. Thou hateſt thy brother when thou ſeeſt him ſin, and doeſt not warn him, & knoweſt he is guilty of ſinful courſes, and doeſt not reprove him; and when thou haſt time, and place, and opportunity, and fit circumſtances to reprove; and yet thou wilt not do it, it is a ſign thou hateſt thy brother; it is the greateſt degree of hatred on them. If a man deny food for the body, and let a man rather dye of hunger, than he will give him meat, or let a man fall into a pit, rather than he will prevent the miſchief, a man is guilty of *bodily* murther; but thou art guilty of the ſoul of thy brother, if thou let him fall into ſin. Thou thinkeſt thy brother is harſh, he will not bear with thee, he is haſty and teſty: no, thou art in an error, *That man that hates reproof, erreth*, ſaith *Solomon*. Indeed a man ſhould not be too ſharp, but firſt tell his brother in private

Prov. 10. 17.

private, that he is in an error: for *reproof* is means of *grace*, it flowes from great love, it is the providence of God that hath caſt it about, that thou ſhouldeſt have reproof given thee; if thou have a heart to take it, it is an argument of love.

*Another reaſon is taken from the primary end of reproof*, which is to bring a man to good, to reduce him into a right way, to convert a man to ſave his ſoul, that is the *primary* end of reproof and admonition: therefore to go on in ſins contrary to it, muſt needs be a great evil. As *Solomon* brings in the wiſdom of the father, Jeſu Chriſt, calling upon people, *O ye fools, how long will ye love folly? turn at my reproofs.* Mark what follows, to what end; *I will pour my ſpirit on you*: there is the end he tells them. *O ye fools*, wretched people without underſtanding, that go on in ſin, and harden your own hearts, that repent not, nor turn not to God, that will not ſubmit to his wiſdom, nor imbrace his word. *ye fools*, that wrong your own ſouls, *Oh turn at my reproof.* Why? This is the reaſon that God reproves a man on this faſhion, it is, that a man may have the ſpirit of God granted him. If thou have an ear to hear reproof, and a heart to drink it in, and to wear it as a Crown of Gold on thy head, and as a chain about thy neck, thou ſhouldeſt have the ſpirit of God for thy labour: The Lord reproves thee that thou mighteſt return back, and have his Spirit, and have mercy and forgiveneſs. This is all the ill will that Gods Miniſters bear thee, and all the hatred that reprovers ſhew, when they tell thee of thy ſins, whatſoever they be, that they may ſtop thy ſteps from going down to Hell.

*Reaſ.* 2. They tend to good.

When the Lord ſends thee Sermon upon Sermon, Preacher after Preacher, thou art called on day by day, (as you hear in this place) This is the infinite goodneſs of God toward your Souls; therefore your ſin is infinite great, if you do not amend, as the wiſe man ſaith, *He that hates reproof ſhall ſurely dye*, Pro. 15. 10. there is no remedy for that man, that man that puts off repentance, God reproves him from day to day, on the Sabbath day and on the week days; he goes to this man, and there he is reproved; and to another, and there he is reproved; and yet he goes on in this deadneſs & formality in the ordinances of God, that man ſhall ſurely dye, there is no remedy, he ſins againſt the infinite mercy of God.

*Reaſ.* 3. It is brutiſh to reprove them.

Thirdly, *There is no reaſon in the world why reproof ſhould be taken otherwiſe than with all willingneſs and thankfulneſs, and chearfulneſs.* If a man have but the reaſon of a man in him, he muſt needs take reproof in good part; he muſt be a beaſt that doth not judge well of him that reproves him. There is an excellent place, *Prov.* 12. 1. *He that puts off reproof is brutiſh*; he that hates reproof is a brute, that man hath no reaſon in him. Art thou a ſwearer, and art reproved for it? thy brother tells thee thou wilt be damned for it. Doſt thou chafe at that man? thou art a beaſt, thou haſt no more underſtanding than an Ox or an Aſs. As it is with a horſe when the Oſtler comes to rub him, he kicks with his heel; when he only beats off the dirt, he lifts up his hinder leg on him, and it may be wounds him: ſo thou haſt no more underſtanding than a beaſt that finds fault with one that reproves thee for thy ſins. So that whatſoever thy ſin

*Simile.*

ſin be, he that tells thee of it, there is no reaſon in the world but that he ſhould be a dear man to thee. Methinks of all men under heaven, godly Miniſters that are faithful in their place and calling, ſhould be the deareſt men to you upon the face of the earth. Why? becauſe they reprove you and tell you of your ſins, and what will become of your ſouls, what will be the Iſſue and Cataſtrophe of all your ways? You that come to Church every day, may read a lecture in the word of God, what will be your doom at the laſt day: you are told of your pride, and adultery, of your whoredom and oaths, carnal Goſpellers of their ſecure and carnal condition, and common profeſſors of their formolity, and other luſts that men are given to; you are told of all. I ſay, the feet of Gods meſſengers ſhould be beautiful, you ſhould hug the meſſengers, and put their reproofs in your boſoms, & let them have efficacy on your ſouls, and go and put them in practice.

The Uſe of this is,

*Uſe* 1. The miſery to want reprovers.

Firſt, Is it ſo, that it is the infinite mercy of God to reprove men of their ſins, to tell them of whatſoever is amiſs in their hearts and lives? let me tell you: Firſt, *See here what an infinite puniſhment God is bringing upon the Kingdom when he is taking away reprovers from them.* When God takes away Reprovers, he takes away all mercy and loving kindneſs. Therefore God when he threatned to deliver up *Judah*, to curſe that Kingdom, to plague them for their rebellion, and utterly to give them over, he ſaith he will take away the Reprover; ſaith he to the Prophet, *Thou ſhalt be dumb and not open thy mouth, thou ſhalt not be*

*a reprover to his people, Ezek. 3. 26.* When the Lord would curse that people, and bind them over to a reprobate sense, and deliver them to wrath, the Prophet shall not be a *reprover*, he silences the Prophet. Or, as *Piscator* thinks, the anger of God *silenced* him, or confind him to his house, that he should not propheſie. So when God silences his Ministers, that he takes them from a place, or threatens to take them away, it is a sign of heavy vengeance toward such a people. It may be wicked people laughed at them, and made it a matter of nothing, they were glad that *Ezekiels* mouth was gagged, and it were no matter if the country were rid of a company of Puritans, though they had no such word then, they had as bad, they think all is well; But the time will come that they will curse the day that ever they provoked God to take away their Ministers; we enjoy them by the mercy of God, other places have loſt them, God knows how soon we may loſe ours. In *Hoſ.* 4. 4. the Lord, there, when he would set out the desperate estate of the Children of *Ephraim*, delivers them up to such a state and condition, that none should reprove them, *Let none reprove another.* If they will sin let them; if they will go on in idolatry, let them; if they will harden their own hearts, let them; if they will dye in sin, let them; if they will perish, and be damned for ever, let them. *Let no man reprove another.* It is a lamentable estate.

Or Angel

Generally, people are glad when the Land is swept of all the good Ministers, and the good servants of God: they had rather hear a fine Song in a Pulpit, of one that preacheth morally, or it may be preacheth his own self, or the like, but the

the time will come, when they ſhall ſay as *Solomon* ſaith, *It is better to hear the Reproof of the wiſe, than the Song of fools*, Eccleſ. 7. 5. People love alife to hear the ſong of Fools. When a fool comes up and preacheth, *At what time ſoever a ſinner ſhall repent of his ſin:* And, *Be not juſt over-much*; and what need ſuch ado? Here is more puther than needs, and abuſe places, and wreſt Scripture. As for example, *the Thief* on the Croſs was ſaved at the laſt with a word or two; and they bring the example of the *Publican*, that cryed, *God be merciful to me a ſinner*, and went juſtified to his houſe rather than the Phariſee that made long prayers. And tuſh, what need men be ſo zealous, and preciſe, and puritanical, *Whoſoever calls upon the name of God, ſhall be ſaved*: People love alife ſuch ſongs of fools; but the time ſhall come when peoples eyes ſhall be opened, and their conſciences awakened, and then they will wiſh, *O that we had heard the reproof of the wiſe!*

*Uſe 2.* Againſt deſpiſers of reproof.

*The ſecond Uſe makes againſt thoſe that deſpiſe the reproof of the wiſe, ye deſpiſe not men, but God; ye have deſpiſed me*, Prov. 1. 30. You think you deſpiſe a poor Miniſter, he is ſtrict, and harſh with your ſouls, and preſſeth theſe things upon your conſcience, and it may be, more than he hath warrant to do: ſo you think you do not deſpiſe God, but one only Miniſter: Nay, ſaith Chriſt, *You have deſpiſed my reproof.* When you deſpiſe them that Chriſt ſends, you deſpiſe him. This is an expreſs and explicate ſign of a mans everlaſting deſtruction, when he deſpiſeth reproof, as in that ſpeech of the Prophet to *Amoziah*,

*moziah, I know that the Lord hath determined to deſtroy thee, becauſe thou haſt not hearkened to my reproof*, 2 *Chron.* 25. 16. So I may ſay, I know that God hath determined to deſtroy a Nation, a City, or people, when they will not take counſel of Gods Meſſengers, when they will not hearken to inſtruction: they have been called upon, national ſins have been ripped up, parochial ſins have been ſpoken of, yet when they are told, they will not be reproved. We that are the Miniſters of God, know that God will deſtroy as many as turn not at reproof. I let this paſs.

I ſhould now ſhew the grievouſneſs of this ill of ſtanding out againſt reproof: it is expreſſed two ways.

The grievouſneſs of ſtanding out againſt reproof.

First, In the *ſinfulneſs* of it, *to harden a mans heart.*

Secondly in the *puniſhment*, *He ſhall be deſtroyed without remedy.* And in the *deſtruction* you may ſee here.

First, the *unexpectedneſs* of it, *He ſhall be deſtroyed ſuddenly.*

Secondly, *the totalneſs* of it *He ſhall be deſtroyed.* The word ſignifies to ſhatter all in pieces.

Thirdly, *the irrecoverableneſs* of it, *without remedy.*

Fourthly, *the ſutableneſs* of it, his puniſhment is according to his ſin. Mark, as he hardened his own heart againſt God, ſo God will harden his heart againſt him: as no remedy would turn him from his ſin, ſo no remedy ſhall turn God from his wrath. As his ſin was in hardening his heart like ſtone, ſo God ſhall deal with him as a ſtone is dealt with, he ſhall deſtroy him. The word in the

*origi-*

*original* signifies *broken to pieces as a stone is broken*, that is, the Lord will deal with him just in his own kind. Hence I might observe this doctrine: That,

*The Lord proportions punishments to mens sin.*

*Doct.* God proportions punishments to sins.

Just as a mans sin is, so is the punishment. *David* sinned in numbering the people, 2 *Sam.* 24 15. and God punished him in that: *Pharaoh* sinned in destroying and drowning the males of the Israelites, God smote his first-born; he drowned their babes, and he himself was drowned in the Sea. I might bring abundance of examples.

Now the *Reasons* of this are:

*Reas.* 1. To shew the equity of the punishment.

First, *because hereby a mans punishment appears to be so much the more equal and worthy.* Retaliation is a most equal punishment to the sin; there is no inequality in it but this, that it is too merciful: *An eye for an eye, & a tooth for a tooth, burn for burn, wound for wound.* You know an eye is equal for an eye: so when God punisheth a man just in his own kind, *quid* for *quo*, that as there was no remedy would turn him from his sin, so there shall be no remedy shall turn God from his wrath. Herein Gods punishment appears to be most equal, *Rev.* 16. 5, 6. *Thou art righteous, O Lord, in that thou judgest thus: for she hath shed the blood of thy Saints, therefore thou hast given them blood to drink, for they are worthy.* Thou thirstedst after blood, there it is for thee: so this is most equal, when men have dealt thus and thus with God, when God shall deal so and so with them, they cannot find fault. When a man drinks as he brews, and reaps as he sows, and finds as he brings, what inequality is here? *It shall come to pass, that as when I called, they would*

*would not hear, ſo when they call, I will not anſwer*, Zach. 7. When God calls upon thee, and thou wilt not hear, afterwards when thou calleſt for mercy, if he do not hear thee, it is juſt.

*Reaſ.* 5. It ſtops a mans mouth.

Secondly, another reaſon is, *becauſe this ſtops a mans mouth, it convinceth a mans conſcience*; when a mans conſcience finds that he is ſerved in his own kind, that he is paid in his own coin, it ſtops his mouth. *Adonibezek* he had cut off the thumbs and toes of 70 Kings: afterwards he was ſerved juſt ſo as he had dealt with others; he had cut off their thumbs and toes, and made them gather orts under his table; ſo afterwards his thumbs and toes were cut off. Now mark what his conſcience ſaith Judg. 1. 7. *As I have dealt, ſo God hath dealt with me.* As if he had ſaid, God knows wherefore the Children of *Judah* have done this: they know not why they cut off my thumbs, and the reaſon why they cut off my toes; God knows what they looked at in puniſhing me thus: but Gods juſt providence hath dealt thus with me, in this kind I ſerved others. This is ſo palpable a puniſhment, ſo equal and juſt, that though the ſin were committed twenty years ago, yet a mans conſcience will find out his ſin twenty years after As *Joſephs* brethren ſold him, and after caſt him into a pit, two and twenty years after, when *Joſeph* was harſh with them, ſee what their conſcience ſaith; *Doubtleſs we are guilty of our brothers blood, when we ſaw the anguiſh of his ſoul, and he beſought us, and we would not hear.* As if they had ſaid, What is the matter why the man is thus harſh? he never ſaw us before, why ſhould he be ſo harſh, and we be ſtrangers? Nay, ſaith conſcience, you are well ſerved, remember

ber you were harsh to your brother, if you dealt so with him, marvel not if you be dealt so with. And after when they came to their Inn, & found their money, they wondred, *What is this that God hath done?* Their conscience I warrant you, bit them in the teeth: without doubt they thought the money that they took for selling of their brother had humbled them as a Ghost; did not we pay the man money for his corn that we bought? Nay, saith conscience, you are rightly served, here is the money you sold your brother for, (though it was not so) without doubt conscience upbraided them: naturally we are apt to find fault with Gods judgments, and quarrel, but when conscience sees the equity of them, we have nothing to say.

Thirdly, all the standers-by may see the equity of it, when the punishment is according to the sin: nay, divinity makes this argument, that there is a God to judg the earth, because men are punisht in their own kind. I will shew you one example of *Abimelech*, that wretch, that slew 70 of his brethren upon one stone, *Judg.* 9 7. afterward, when he came to stand under the tower of *Babel*, a woman flung a piece of a milstone upon his head, & killed him: This was strange all the standers-by might say, that *Abimelech* should be killed with a stone: no question the woman thought nothing, she flung the stone because she had nothing else to fling; it was strange it should hit him so pat, it might have hit another as well as him, the stone might have fallen to the ground as well as on him, and that it should be by a woman, & a milstone too, milstones are not used on the top of a Tower, & a milstone broken that a woman could lift it, and that he should

ſhould be killed by a milſtone, & not with a ſword; nay, might all the ſtanders-by ſay, This God hath done, he was the ſon of a ſtrange woman, and a woman hath killed him; he killed his brethren upon one ſtone, and now a ſtone hath killed him; all the world might be able to ſay, This God hath done.

The Uſe of this is:

Firſt, Let no creature in the world complain of Gods dealing, if he puniſh us according to our kind: he that kills with the ſword, ſhall be killed with the ſword. He that ſtops his ears from hearing the poor, what ſhall his puniſhment be? he ſhall cry and not be heard. He that ſhews no mercy, how ſhall he be puniſhed? he ſhall receive no mercy, Jam. 2. 13. *Wo to thee that ſpoiledſt, and waſt not ſpoiled: when thou ceaſeſt ſpoiling, others ſhall ſpoil thee*, Iſa. 33. 1. *Judge not*, (ſaith Chriſt) what if I do? *then thou ſhalt be judged*. Thus God recompenceth the fruit of a mans doing. Here is no *Momus* can complain, no *Ariſtarchus* that can find fault with the juſtice and judgement of God.

Secondly, *It is not amiſs to conſider and ſee how God proportions puniſhments to ſins.*

In { *Kind*, *Quantity*, *Quality*, *Time*, *Place*, and other Circumſtances.

In *Kind*; *He ſhall eat the fruit of his own ways*: that is, he ſhall be puniſhed in kind. It is a ſimilitude from a tree, every tree brings forth according

ding to its own kind; if it be an Apple-tree, it brings forth Apples; if a Crab tree, Crabs, a Pear-tree, Pears: So every ſinner ſhall be puniſhed in their kind, a Miniſter ſhall be puniſhed in his kind, wicked Maſters in their kind, Servants in theirs, Rich in theirs, Poor in theirs: If a man be a drunkard he ſhall be puniſhed in one kind, if he be an adulterer in another: *Every man ſhall eat the the fruit of his own ways.* Every ſin brings an homogeneal puniſhment, accorcing to the nature of it. I cannot ſtand to follow this, though it be very clear in Scripture.

Secondly, it is in *Quantity*; God proportions the *puniſhment* according to the *ſin*; he that *ſowes ſparingly ſhall reap ſparingly*; but he that *ſowes bountifully ſhall reap bountifully*. *Little* ſins, *little* puniſhments; and *great* ſins, *great* puniſhments. There are little ſins, moat ſins, gnat ſins, and there are Camel ſins: ſo there are little and great puniſhments, ſome meet with many, ſome with fewer ſtripes. Juſt according to mans ſins, ſo the Lord ſhapes out the puniſhment, for great ſinners great plague, and for every one according to his own meaſure. God hath a pair of ballance that he means to weigh men in: As he weighed *Belſhazzar*, ſo he will weigh thee, and look how much ſin thou putteſt in one ſcale, ſo much puniſhment God will put in the other; he will not abate thee one oath, not one idle thought, not one breach of the Sabbath, not one neglect of hearing the word, or of other duties; the Lord will put wrath in one ballance, as thou putteſt ſin in the other; he will make the ſcales even to a hair: as he dealt with *Belſhazzar*, *He will lay righteouſneſs to the line,*

*line*, and judgement to the plummet, and weigh thee out in the ſcales; and thou ſhalt have juſt according to thy ſins.

As the Lord deals with his own people, he will not abate ſo much as a cup of cold water, but it ſhall be rewarded: he will reward all, from the greateſt to the leaſt; ſo he will deal with the wicked, there ſhall no ſin paſs unpuniſhed.

Again, there is a proportion in the *Quality*. If *Adam* ſin in eating, he ſhall be puniſhed in eating; if the women of *Judah* ſin in apparel, they ſhall be puniſhed in apparel, *Iſa.* 3. 24. In *Wiſ.* 11. 16. *A man ſhall be puniſhed in that that he ſins in.* If *Abſalon* ſin in his hair, he ſhall be puniſhed in it; *Nebuchadnezzar* might find his ſin in his brutiſh condition, and the Prodigal might find his ſin in the Hog-trough: So if thou find thy ſelf in want, conſider if thou haſt not waſted thy means, if thou haſt not been vain in building, and prodigal in ſpending, or gaming, or unneceſſary bounty, and immoderate liberality beyond thy means: Art thou puniſhed in thy trade or children, *&c.* See if thou haſt not ſinned in them: for where there is ſin, God will proportion the puniſhment to the ſin.

Fourthly, God proportions the puniſhment to the ſin in regard of the time. The ſame hour that *Belſhazzar* was drinking & quaffing in the Temple, the ſame hour the hand of God was upon him; if it be not upon thee the ſame hour, it may be to morrow at the ſame hour. It may be thou haſt ſinned this day at ſuch an hour, it may be God will ſtrike thee to morrow at the ſame time, or this day ſeven-night, it may be the next year. *Nebuchadnezzar*

*buchadnezzar* was warned of his pride this year, and the same time twelve-month the Lord *drove him from among men.* So in *Act.* 13.24. One Sabbath-day the Jews heard *Paul* preach, and went out before the Sermon was quite done, they were not able to stand to the blessing; the same day seven-night the Lord made the Apostles shake off the dust of their feet against them, and leave them to a reprobate sense.

Fifthly, the Lord proportions his punishments to the Place. It is strange many times, that the drunkard shou'd get his death in the same Alehouse where he got his liquor. In *Judg.* 7. in that story of *Oreb* and *Zeeb*, *Oreb* at the Rock *Oreb* devised against the Children of Israel, and upon the same Rock he was killed: And *Zeeb* another Persecuter of the Children of God, so the Psalmist calls them; he at the Wine-press of *Zeeb* took victuals of the Children of Israel, and in the same place his life was taken away.

Just as Judges and Magistrates at this day, they hang up men where they have done the villany. As they do with Dogs and Cats, they carry them to the place, to the Cellar or the Buttery where they do the mischief. But the Beasts themselves, though they have no reason are able to pick out the meaning of it. The Lord punisheth sinners in the same place. Here where thou hast been deaf to hear the word of God, when thy heart riseth against the Preacher, in the same place (it may be) the Lord will deliver thee up to a reprobate sense. In the same place, at the Lords Table, where thou comest unworthily, thou shalt eat and drink thine own damnation.

FINIS.